The Dynasts

A Drama

of the Napoleonic Wars in three parts, nineteen Acts & one hundred and thirty Scenes.

by

Thomas Hardy

Part Second.

"And I heard sounds of insult, shame, & wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars."

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[The Ancient Spirit of the Years
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[The Spirit of the Pities
[Chorus of the Pities

[Spirit Sinister & Ironic
[Chorus of Sinister & Ironic Spirits

[The Spirit of Rumour
[Chorus of Rumours

The Shade of the Earth.
Spirit Messengers.
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II. Persons of the Drama

The names printed in italics are those of mute figures only.
[underlined red in this MS.]

Men.

George the Third.
The Prince of Wales, afterwards Prince Regent.
The Royal Dukes.
Fox.

Perceval
Castlereagh
An under-Secretary
Sheridan
The Duke of Bedford

Lord Moira.

Lords Yarmouth & Keith.

Another Lord.

Other Peers; Ambassadors, ministers, ex-ministers, Members of Parliament & Persons of Quality & office.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Lord Wellington.

Sir John Moore.

Sir John Hope.

Sir David Baird.

General Beresford.

Colonel Anderson.

~~Colonel Balgowan.~~

Colonel Graham.

Major Colborne, principal Aide-de-camp to Moore.

Captain Hardinge

Paget; Fraser; Hill; Napier.

A Captain of Hussars, & others.

~~Two other captains~~

Other English Generals, Colonels, Aides, Couriers, & military Officers.

Two spies.

Two army surgeons.

An army Chaplain.

English forces en masse.

A Sergeant of the Waggon-train.

A sergeant of the Forty third.

Two soldiers of the Ninth.

Deserters & Stragglers.

Dr. ~~Robert~~ Willis.

Sir Henry Halford.

Dr. Heberden.

Dr Baillie.

The King's Apothecary

A Gentleman

Two attendants on the King.

Members of a London Club

An Englishman in Vienna

Trotter, Secretary to Fox

A Beau.

Mr. Forth, Master of Ceremonies

Servants

A constable.

Napoléon Bonaparte.

Joseph Bonaparte.

Louis & Jerome Bonaparte, & other members of Napoléon's family.

Cambacérès, arch-chancellor.

Talleyrand.

President of the Senate.

Caulaincourt.

Lebrun; Duroc; Prince of Neufchâtel; Grand Duke of Berg.

Eugène de Beauharnais.

Champagny, Foreign Minister.

de Bausset, chamberlain.

Murat

Soult

Masséna

Berthier

Junot

Foy

Loison

Ney, Lannes, & other French marshals, general & regimental Officers, aides, & Couriers.

Two French sub-alterns

Another French officer

French forces en masse.

Grand Marshal, Grand Almoners, Heralds, & other officials at Napoleon's marriage.

Abbé de Pradt, Chapel-master.

Corvisart, First Physician } to Marie Louise

Bourdier, Second Physician } to Marie Louise

Dubois, accoucheur } to Marie Louise

Maskers at a ball.

Two Servants at the Tuileries

A Parisian Crowd

Guillet de Gevrillière, a Conspirator

Louis XVIII of France.

French Princes in England.

The King of Prussia

Prince Henry of Prussia

Prince Royal of Bavaria

Prince Hohenlohe

Generals Ruchel, Tauenzien, and attendant officers.

Prussian forces en masse.

Prussian stragglers

Berlin citizens

Carlos IV, King of Spain

Fernando, Prince of Asturias, son to the King.

Godoy "Prince of Peace", lover of the Queen.

Count of Montijo

Viscount Materosa } Spanish Deputies

Don Diego de la Vega } Spanish Deputies

Godoy's Guards & other soldiery

Spanish Citizens

A servant to Godoy

A Lifeguardsman of Aranjuez

Spanish forces en masse

Camp-followers

Muleteers.

Francis, Emperor of Austria.

Metternich.

tr. Schwarzenberg.
Another Austrian Minister
d'Audenarde, an equerry.
Austrian Officers
Aides-de-camp
Austrian forces en masse.
Couriers & Secretaries.
Viennese citizens

The Emperor Alexander
The Grand-duke Constantine.
Prince Labanoff
Count Lieven
Generals Bennigsen, Ouwaroff, & others.
Officers in attendance on Alexander.

Women.

Caroline, Princess of Wales
Duchess of York
Duchess of Rutland
Marchioness of Salisbury
Marchioness of Hertford
Other Peeresses.
Mrs Fitzherbert
Ambassadors wives, wives of ministers, members of Parliament, & other Ladies of note.

The Empress Joséphine.
Hortense, Queen of Holland.
The mother of Napoléon.
Princess Pauline, & others of Napoléon's family.
Duchess of Montebello.
Madame de Montesquiou.
Madame Blaise, nurse to Marie Louise.
Wives of French ministers & other officials.

~~Women of the Chamber &~~ Other Ladies of the French court.
Duchess of Angoulême

Louisa, Queen of Prussia
The Countess Voss, Lady-in-waiting.
Berlin Ladies

María Luisa, Queen of Spain.
Thereza of Bourbon, wife to Godoy.
Doña Josefa Tudó, Mistress to Godoy.
Lady in waiting to the Queen.
A servant.

M. Louisa Beatrix, Empress of Austria
The Archduchess Maria Louisa, afterwards the Empress Marie Louise.
Madame Metternich.
Ladies of the Austrian Court.

The Empress-Mother of Russia.
Grand-duchess Anne of Russia.

Act

[For type, arrangement, &c. refer to Part I]

(1)

Act First.

Scene I.

London. Fox's Lodgings, Arlington Street.

Fox, the Foreign Secretary in the new ministry of All-the-Talents, sits at a table writing. He is a stout swarthy man with shaggy eyebrows, & his breathing is somewhat obstructed. His very shabby clothes seem to have been slept in. Trotter, his private secretary, is writing at another table near.

A servant enters.

SERVANT

Another stranger presses to see you, sir.

FOX (without raising his eyes)

Oh; another. What's he like?

SERVANT.

A foreigner, sir; though not so out-at-elbows as might be thought from ~~that~~ denomination. He says he's from Gravesend, having lately left Paris,

& that you sent him a passport. He comes with a police-officer.

Fox

Ah, to be sure. I remember. Bring him in, & tell the officer to wait outside. (Servant goes out.) Trotter, will you leave us for a few minutes. But be within hail.

The secretary retires, & the servant shows in a man who calls himself Guillet de Gevrillière — a tall thin figure of thirty, with restless dark eyes. The door being shut behind him he is left alone with the minister. Fox points to a seat, leans back, & surveys his visitor.

Gevrillière.

My thanks to you, sir, for this privilege
Of reaching England, & of calling here.
Without a fore-extended confidence
Like this of yours, my plans would not have sped. (A pause)
Europe, alas, sir, has her waiting foot
Upon the sill of further slaughter-scenes!

Fox

I fear it is so! — In your lines you wrote,
I think, that you are a true Frenchman born?

Gevrillière

I did, sir.

Fox

How contrived you, then, to cross?

Gevrillière

It was from Embden that I shipped for Gravesend,
In a small sailer called the Toby, sir,
Masked under Prussian colours. Embden I'd reached
On foot, on horseback, & in divers ways,
From Paris over Holland, secretly.

Fox.

And you convey some ~~message or some clue~~ tidings of much pith,
Whose tenour would be priceless to the state?

Gevrillière.

I do. It is, in brief, no more nor less
Than means to mitigate & even end
These welfare-wasting wars; ay, usher in
A painless spell of peace.

Fox

Prithee speak on.
No statesman can desire it more than I.

Gevrillière (looking to see that the door is shut)

No nation, sir, can live its natural life.

Or think its thoughts in these days unassailed,
No crown-capt head enjoy tranquillity.
The cause of such high spring-tide of disorder,
Fevered disquietude, & ~~abounding~~ ~~[illegible]~~ forceful death.
Is One, — a single man. He — need I name? —
The ruler is of France.

Fox.

Well, in the past
I fear that it has been so. But we see
Good reason still to hope that broadening views,
Politer wisdom, now is keeping him
To ~~better~~ saner guidance of his ~~conquering~~ ~~chattering~~ arrogant car.

Gevrillière

The generous hope will never be fulfilled!
Ceasing to ~~clog~~ ~~fight~~ bluff, then ceases he to be.
None sees that written largelier than himself.

Fox.

Then what may be the valued information
That you can bring me in such circumstance?
Sir, I incline to read you as a spy,
And not the honest help for honest men
You gave you out to be.

E Lucas
Hislop

Gevrillière

I beg you, sir,
To spare me that suspicion. Never a thought
Could be more groundless. Solemnly I vow
That notwithstanding what his signals show
The Emperor of France is as I say. —
Yet bring I good assurance, and declare
A remedy for all bruised Europe's sores.

Fox (impatiently)

Well, parley to the point, for I confess
No new negociation do I ~~see~~ note
That you can open up, in such a case.

Gevrillière.

To speak then to the point permit me, sir; —
The sovereign remedy for an ill effect
Is the extinction of its evil cause.
Safely & surely how to compass this
I have the weighty honour to disclose,
Certain immunities being guaranteed
By those your power can influence, & yourself.

Fox (astonished)

Assassination?

Gevrillière

I care not for names.

A deed's true name is as its purpose is.
The lexicon of Liberty & Peace
Defines not this one deed as assassination;
Though maybe it is writ so in the tongue
Of courts & universal tyranny.

Fox.

Why brought you this proposal here to me?

Gevrillière.

My knowledge of your love of things humane,
Things free, things fair, of truth, of tolerance,
Right, justice, national tranquillity,
Prompted belief & hope in such a man. —
The matter is by now well forwarded,
A house at Plassy hired as pivot-point
From which the high intention can be worked,
And soon made certain. To our good allies
No risk attaches; merely to ourselves.

Fox (touching a private bell)

Sir, your unconscienced hardihood confounds me,
And your mind's measure of my character
Insults it sorely. By your late-sent lines
Of specious import, by your bland address —

I have been led to prattle hopefully
With a cut-throat confessed!

The head constable & the Secretary enter at the same moment.

Ere worse befall,
Sir, up & get you gone most dexterously;
Conduct this man; lose ~~Or worse will follow~~ never sight of him (to the officer)
Till haled aboard some anchor-weighing craft
Bound to remotest coasts from us & France.

Gevrillière (unmoved)
How you may handle me concerns me little.
The project will as roundly ripe itself
Without as with me. Trusty hands remain,
Though I bleach white on ageing austral shores! –
~~I readily go wheresoever you appoint~~
I thank you for the audience. Long ere this
I might have reft your life! Ay, notice ~~[illegible]~~ here –
(He produces a dagger: it ~~which~~ is snatched from him)
You need not have done that! Even had you risen
To wrestle with, insult, strike, injure me,
It would have lain unused. In hands like mine
And my allies', the man of peace is safe,
Treat as he may our corporal dwelling-place
In his misreading ~~[illegible]~~ of a moral ~~[illegible]~~ code.

Exeunt Gevrillière & the constable.

Fox.

Trotter, indeed you well may stare at me!
I look warm, eh? — and I am windless, too;
I have sufficient reason to be so.
That dignified & pensive gentleman
Was a bold bravo, waiting for his chance.
He sketched a scheme for murdering Bonaparte,
Either — as in my haste I understood —
By shooting from a window as he passed,
Or by some other foul & stealthy means
That haunt sad brains which brood on despotism,
But lack the tools to justly cope therewith.....
On later thoughts I feel not fully sure
If, in the hurry, I did right in this.
No; hail at once the man in charge of him
And give the word that he is to be detained.

The secretary goes out. Fox walks to the window in deep reflection till the secretary returns.

Secretary.

I was in time, sir. He has been detained.

Fox.

Now what does common honour ask of me? —
No less than that I ~~bear~~ bare this poppling plot

To the French ruler & our fiercest foe! –
Maybe ~~it~~ 'twas but a hoax to pocket pay;
And yet it may be more . . . .
The man's indifference to his own fate
Beamed out as one exalted trait in him,
And showed the altitude of his rash dream! –
Well now I'll get me on to Downing Street,
There to draw up a note to Talleyrand
Retailing him the facts. – What signature
Subscribed this desperate fellow when he wrote?

Secretary.

"Guillet de la Gevrillière." Here it stands –

Fox.

Doubtless it was a false one. Come along. (*Looking out of the window*)
Ah – here's Sir Francis Vincent: he'll go with us.
Ugh, what a twinge! ~~Lone-spaced time~~ Time signals that he draws
Towards the clock-stroke of my working-day!
~~And that~~ I fear old England soon must hold her speech
With Europe through another mouth than mine!

Secretary.

I trust not, sir. Though you should rest awhile.

The very servants' selves are invalid
By the unceasing labours of your post,
And these strange visitors of every sort
That trade upon your ~~[illegible]~~ magnanimity
To gain an audience morning, night, & noon,
Leaving you no respite.

Fox

'Tis true; 'tis true.
How I shall love my summer holiday
At pleasant Saint-Ann's-Hill!

He leans on the secretary's arm, & they go out.

Hislop

~~V~~ H. Slater

Scene II.

The Route between London & Paris.

A view, now nocturnal, now diurnal, from on high over the Straits of Dover, & stretching from city to city. By night Paris & London seem each as a little swarm of lights surrounded by a halo; by day as a confused glitter of white & grey. The Channel between them is as a mirror reflecting the sky, brightly or faintly as the hour may be.

Spirit of the Pities

What mean these couriers shooting shuttlewise
To Paris & to London, turn & turn?

Recording Angels (chanting in antiphons)

I.

The words of Fox the English minister, spokesman in England's cause to states afar,

II.

Traverse the waters borne by one of these; whereto the Imperial ~~[illegible]~~ responses are,

I.

"The principles of honour & of truth which ever actuate the sender's mind

II.

"Herein are written largely. ~~[illegible]~~ Take our thanks: ~~declare~~ We read that this conjuncture undesigned

I.

"Unfolds felicitous means of showing ~~him~~ you that still our wish is set, as ~~ours~~ yours, on peace,

II.

"The terms that shaped the Treaty of Amiens being the base & fundament of these."

~~I~~

~~[illegible]~~

I

Comes then: "The path to lasting amity the King of England studies to pursue;

II.

"With Russia hand in hand he ~~can~~ hastes to soothe the long convulsions thrilling Europe through."

I

Still fare the shadowy missioners across, by Dover-road & Calais Channel-track

II.

From Thames-side towers to Paris palace-gates; from Paris leisurely to London back.

I

The Emperor next: "Too plainly scan we this: being pledged to treat, one Emperor with one King,

II

"You yet will strike the jarring opposite & note discordant with such promising.

I.

"In these last words, then, of this pregnant parle; I trust I may persuade your Excellency

II.

"That in no circumstance, on no pretence, a party to our pact can Russia be".

Spirit Sinister.

Fortunately for the manufacture of corpses by machinery Napoléon sticks to this veto, & so wards off the awkward catastrophe of a general peace descending upon Europe. ~~having learnt that peace could be signed in a month if he wished, makes a pretext of this question of admitting Russia as a pretext against signing~~. Now England.

Recording Angels (continuing)

I.

Thereon speeds down through Kent & Picardy, evenly as some southing sky-bird's shade:

II.

"We gather (not from your Imperial lines) a reason why our words should be re-weighed.

I.

"We hold to Russia not as our ally prospectively: she is full-plighted so:

II.

"Thus trembles peace upon this pivot-point: will you that Russia be let in, or no?"

I.

France robs out big words across the strait: "To treat with you confederate with the Tsar

II.

"Presumes us sunk in sloughs of shamefulness from which we yet stand gloriously afar.
~~[illegible]~~

I.

"The English army must be Flanders-fed, & entering Picardy with ~~prosperous prance~~ pompous prance

II.

"To warrant such! Enough. Our comfort is the crime of further strife lies not with France."

Spirit of the Pities.

Alas, what prayer will save the struggling lands,
Whose lives are skittles to these bowling hands!

~~Spirit Sinister.~~

~~[illegible]~~

Recording Angels I & II, (continuing)

France secretly with — Russia plights her troth! —
Britain, that lonely [illegible], is shunned by both.

Spirit Sinister.

It is as neat as an uncovered check at chess. You may now mark Fox's countenance at what he calls the extraordinary conduct of his chilly friend the Muscovite.

Spirit of the Pities.

His hand so trembles it can scarce retain
The quill wherewith he lets Lord Yarmouth know
Reserve is no more needed!

Spirit Ironic.

Now enters another character of this remarkable little piece — Lord Lauderdale — & again the messengers fly.

Spirit of the Pities.

But what strange ~~phantom~~ spectre, pale & noiseless, comes,
By us perceived, unrecognized by ~~invisible to~~ those;
~~Entering~~ the very closet & retreat
Of England's Minister so sovereignly?

Spirit of the Years.

He is an honoured messenger of the Will
In one of his many masks, my old friend Death. —
The statesman's feeble form you may perceive
Now hustled into the Invisible,
And the unfinished game of Dynasties
Left to proceed without him!

Spirit of the Pities.

Here, then, ends
My hope for Europe's sweet reposefulness!

(14)

II.

"Perceive we Shrink in thoughts of shame ~~[illegible]~~ from what we yet
~~stand [illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~ ~~fear~~.

I.

"The English army must be Flanders-fed, & entering Picardy
with ~~[illegible]~~ ~~prance~~ pompous prance

II.

"To warrant such! Enough. One example is the crime of further
~~side~~ [illegible] [illegible] with France."

Spirit of the Pities.

Alas, what prayer will save the struggling lands,
Whose lives are shuttles to these hurtling hands!

~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~

I & II

Recording Angels, (continuing)

France secretly [illegible] — Russia [illegible] the truth! —
Britain [illegible] [illegible] is ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible] by both.

It is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] Fox's [illegible] at what he calls the extraordinary [illegible]-
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible]

(14)

He ~~[illegible]~~ was the ~~[illegible]~~ friend of peace — did his great best
To shed her ~~[illegible]~~ balms upon humanity;
And now he's gone! No substitute remains[+].

Spirit Ironic.

Ay: the remainder of the episode is purely farcical. Negociations are again affected; but finally you discern ~~there~~ Lauderdale applying for passports; & the English Parliament declares to the nation that peace with France cannot be made.

Recording Angels (concluding.)

I

The smouldering dudgeon of the Prussian king, meanwhile, upon the horizon's rim afar

II

Bursts into running flame, that all his signs of friendliness were met by moves for war.

I.

[Attend & hear, for ~~[illegible]~~ hear ye faintly ~~[illegible]~~ may, his manifesto made at Erfurt-town,

II.

That to arms only dares he now confide the safety & the honour of his crown!

Spirit of the Years.

Draw down the curtain, then, & overscreen
This too-protracted verbal fencing-scene;
And let us turn to clanging foot & horse,
Ordnance, & all the enginry of Force!

Clouds close over the perspective.

A Slater
G. Miller

Scene III.

The streets of Berlin.

It is afternoon, & the thoroughfares are crowded with citizens in an excited & anxious mood. A central path is left open for some expected arrival.

There enters on horseback a fair woman, whose rich brown curls stream flutteringly in the breeze & whose long blue habit flaps against the flank of her curvetting white mare. She is the renowned Louisa, Queen of Prussia, riding at the head of a regiment of hussars & wearing their uniform. As she prances along the thronging citizens acclaim her enthusiastically.

Spirit of the Pities.

Who is this fragile ~~shape~~ Fair in fighting trim?

Spirit of the Years.

She is the flower of Prussia, whose resolve
Gives ballast to the purpose of her spouse,
And holds him to what men call governing.

Spirit of the Pities

Queens have engaged in war; but war's grim trade
Rings with a stroke unnatural, strange, & forced,
Practised by woman's hands!

Spirit of the Years.

Of her we view
The energy is that of scores of men,
The strength but half a one's.

Spirit of the Pities

A. Innes.

Would fate had ruled
The ~~spirit~~ valour had been his, hers but the charm!
Spirit of Rumour
But he has nothing on't, & she has all.
The ~~foul~~ coarse scurrilities of the bulletins
Despatched to Paris, thence the wide world ~~over~~ through,
Disturb the dreams of her by those who love her,
And thus her brave attempts to save the realm
Have blurred her ~~fame~~ picture, soiled her gentleness,
And worked her ~~person~~ credit harm.

First Citizen.

Yes, by God: send an ultimatum to Paris, by God: that's what we'll do, by God. This Confederation of the Rhine was the evil thought of an evil man on purpose to ruin us, by God!

Second Citizen.

This country double-faced & double-tongued,
This France, or rather say, indeed, this man —
(Peoples are honest dealers in the mass) —
This man, to sign a stealthy scroll with Russia
That shuts us off from all indemnities

While swearing faithful friendship with our King
And still professing our safe wardenry,
To fatten other kingdoms at our cost,
Insults us grossly, & makes Europe clang
With echoes of our wrongs. The little states
Of this antique & homely German land
Are severed from their blood-allies & kin —
Hereto of one tradition, interest, hope —
In calling lord this rank adventurer,
Who'll thrust them as a sword against ourselves. —
Surely Great Frederick sweats within his tomb!

Third Citizen.

Well, we awake, though we have slumbered long,
And she is sent by Heaven to kindle us.

The Queen approaches to pass back again with her suite. The vociferous applause is repeated. They regard her as she nears.

To call her Amazon, a blusterer,
A brazen comrade of the bold dragoons
Whose uniform she dons! Her, whose each act
Shows but a mettled modest woman's zeal,
Without a hazard of her dignity
Or moment's sacrifice of seemliness,
To fend off ill from home!

II Butler

Fourth Citizen (entering)

The tidings fly that Russian Alexander
Declines with emphasis to ratify
The pact of his ambassador with France,
And that the offer made the English King
To compensate the latter at our cost
Has not been taken.

Third Citizen.

And it never will be!
Thus evil does not always ~~prosper~~ flourish, faith.
Throw down the gage while God is fair to us;
He may be foul anon!

Fifth Citizen (entering)

Our ambassador Lucchesini is already leaving Paris. He could stand the Emperor no longer, so the Emperor said he could not stand Lucchesini. Knobelsdorf, who takes his place, has decided to order his snuff by the ounce & his candles by the pound, lest he should not be there long enough to ~~to~~ use more.

The Queen goes by, & they gaze at her & at the escort of soldiers.

Haven't we soldiers? Haven't we the Duke of Brunswick to command 'em? Haven't we provisions, hey? Haven't we fortresses & an Elbe, to ~~check~~ bar the bounce of an invader?

The cavalcade passes out of sight & the crowd draws off.

First Citizen

By God, I must to beer & 'bacco, to soften my rage, by God.

Exeunt citizens.

Spirit of the Years.

So doth the Will objectify Itself
In likeness of a sturdy people's wrath
Which takes no count of ~~possibilities~~ the new trends of time,
And trusts old glory ~~for~~ in a present need. –
What if their strength should equal not their fire,
And their devotion ~~pass~~ dull their vigilance? –
Uncertainly, by fits, the Will doth work
In Brunswick's blood, their chief, as in themselves;
It ramifies in streams that counterflow
And render movement vague, oldfashioned, late,
Unmatching ~~[illegible]~~ young mobilities elsewhere!

Evening descends on the ~~streets~~ city, & it grows dusk. The soldiers being dismissed from duty, some young officers in a frolic of defiance whet their swords on the steps of the French ambassador's residence as they pass. The noise of whetting is audible through the street.

Chorus of the Pities. (aerial music)

The soul of a nation distrest
~~And~~ Is aflame,

~~Is pressing~~ And heaving with eager unrest
In its aim
To assert its old prowess, & stouten its chronicled fame!

Semichorus I.

It boils in a boisterous thrill
Throughout the mart,
Unconscious well-nigh as the Will
Of its part:
Would it fully might ~~be~~ live so, & feel not the forthcoming smart!

Semichorus II.

In conclaves no voice of reflection
Is heard,
King, Councillors, grudge circumspection
A word,
And victory is visioned, & seemings as facts are averred.

Chorus.

Yea, the soul of a nation distrest
Is aflame,
And heaving with eager unrest
In its aim
At supreme desperations to blazon the national name!

Midnight strikes, lights are extinguished, & the scene disappears.

Scene IV.

The Field of Jena.

Day has just dawned through a grey October haze. The French, with their backs to the dawn, loom out & show themselves to be already under arms. Lannes holding the centre, Ney the right, Soult the extreme right, & Augereau the left. The Imperial Guard & Murat's cavalry are drawn up on the Landgrafenberg, ~~opposite~~ behind the centre of the French position. In a valley stretching along to the rear of this height flows northward towards the Elbe the little river Saale on which the town of Jena stands.

On the irregular plateaux in front of the French lines, & almost close to the latter, are the Prussians under Tauenzien; & away on their right-rear towards Weimar the bulk of the army under Prince Hohenlohe. The Duke of Brunswick (father of the Princess of Wales) is twelve miles off with his force, in the valley of the Ilm.

Enter Napoléon, & men bearing torches who escort him. He moves along the front of his troops, & is lost to view behind the mist & surrounding objects. But his voice is audible.

Napoléon.

Keep your good guard against their cavalry.

In ~~old~~ past repute the formidablest known,
And such it may be now; so asks our heed.
Receive it then in square, unflinchingly.—
Remember, men, last year you captured Ulm,
So make no doubt that you will vanquish these!

Soldiers.

Long live the Emperor! Advance, advance!

Napoléon.

Nay, caution, men! 'Tis mine to time ~~the stroke~~ your deeds
By light of long experience: yours to effect them.

Dumb Show.

Almost immediately glimpses reveal that Lannes' corps is moving forward, & amid an unbroken clatter of firelocks spreads out further & wider upon the stretch of country in front of the Landgrafenberg. The Prussians, surprized at discerning in the fog such masses of the enemy close at hand, recede towards the Ilm.

From Prince Hohenlohe, who is with the body of the Prussians on the Weimar road to the south, comes perspiring the bulk of the infantry to rally the retreating regiments of Tauenzien, & he hastens up himself with the cavalry & artillery. The action is renewed between him & Ney as the clocks of Jena strike ten.

But Augereau is seen coming to Ney's assistance on one

flank of the Prussians, Soult bearing down on the other, while Napoléon on the Landgrafenberg orders the Imperial Guard to advance. The doomed Prussians are driven back, this time more decisively, falling in great numbers & losing many as prisoners as they reel down the sloping land towards the banks of the Ilm behind them. General Ruchel, in a last despairing effort to rally, faces the French onset in person & alone. He receives a bullet through the chest & falls dead.

The crisis of the struggle is reached, though the battle is not over. Napoléon, discerning from the Landgrafenberg that the decisive moment has come, directs Murat to rush forward with all his cavalry. It engages the shattered Prussians, surrounds them, & cuts them down by thousands.

[White line]

From behind the horizon, a dozen miles off, between the din of guns in the visible battle, there can be heard an ominous roar, as of a second invisible battle in progress there. Generals & other officers look at each other & hazard conjectures between whiles, the French with exultation, the Prussians gloomily.

Hohenlohe.

That means the Duke of Brunswick, I conceive,
Encountering the enemy's further force
Led by, they say, Davout & Bernadotte....
God grant his star less lurid rays than ours, &
Or this too pregnant, hoarsely groaning day
Shall, ere its loud delivery be done.

Have twinned disasters to the fatherland
That fifty years will fail to sepulchre!

Enter a straggler on horseback.

~~Battle~~ In Abbey
II

Straggler.

Prince, I have circuited by Auërstädt,
And bring ye dazzling tidings of the fight,
Which, if report by those who saw't be true,
Has raged thereat from clammy day~~break~~ dawn on,
And left us victors!

Hohenlohe

Thitherward go I,
And patch the mischief wrought upon us here!

Enter two more stragglers.

Well, wet-faced men, whence come ye? What d'ye bring?

Straggler II.

Your Highness, I rode straight from Hassenhausen,
Across the stream of battle as it boiled
Betwixt that village & the banks of Saale,
And such the turmoil that no man could speak
On what the issue was.

Hohenlohe (to Straggler III)

Can you add aught?

Straggler III.

Nothing that's clear, your Highness.

Hohenlohe.

Man, your mien
Is that of one who knows, but will not say.
Detain him here.

Straggler III.

The blackness of my news
Your Highness, darks my sense! ..... I saw this much:
The Duke of Brunswick, spurring on to head
His charging grenadiers, received in the face
A grape-shot stroke that gouged out half of it,
Proclaiming then & there his life foredone.

Hohenlohe.

Fallen? Brunswick! Reed in council, rock in fire .....
Ah, this he looked for. Many a time of late
Has he, by some strange gift of foreknowing,
Declared his fate was hovering in such wise!

Straggler III.

His aged form being borne beyond the strife,
The gallant Moellendorf, in ~~hot~~ flushed despair,
Swore he would not survive; &, pressing on,
He, too, was slaughtered. Patriotic rage
Filled marshals' breasts & men's. The King himself

Fought like the commonest. But nothing served.
His horse is slain; his own doom yet unknown.
Prince William, too, is wounded. Brave Schmettau
Is broke; himself disabled. All give way,
And regiments crash like trees at felling-time.

Hohenlohe.

No more. We match it here. The yielding lines
Still sweep us backward. Backward we must go!

Exeunt Hohenlohe, Staff, Stragglers, etc.

The Prussian retreat from Jena quickens to a rout, many thousands being taken prisoners by Murat, who pursues them to Weimar, where the inhabitants fly shrieking through the streets.

The October day closes in to evening. By this time the troops retiring with the King of Prussia from the second battlefield of Auërstadt have intersected Ruchel's & Hohenlohe's flying battalions from Jena. The crossing streams of fugitives strike panic into each other, & the tumult increases with the thickening darkness till night renders the scene invisible, & nothing remains but a confused diminishing noise, & fitful lights here & there.

The fog of the morning returns, & curtains all.

Scene V.

Berlin. A room overlooking a public place.

A group of ladies are gathered at the windows, gazing out and conversing anxiously. The time is drawing towards noon when the clatter of a galloping horse's hoofs is heard echoing up the long Potsdamer Strasse, & presently turning into the Leipziger Strasse reaches the open space commanded by the ladies' outlook. It ceases before a Government building opposite them, & the rider disappears into the courtyard.

First Lady.

Yes: surely he is a courier from the field!

Second Lady.

Shall we not hasten down, & take from him
The doom his tongue may deal us?

Third Lady.

We may learn
As soon by watching here as hasting hence
The tenour of his news. (They wait.) Ah yes: see—see—
The bulletin is straightway to be nailed.
He was, then, from the field.....

They wait on while the bulletin is affixed.

Mr Abbey / Mr Lean

Second Lady.

I cannot scan the words the scroll proclaims;
Peer as I will these too thick-thronging dreads
Bring water to the eyes. Grant us, good Heaven,
That victory be where she is needed most
To prove thy goodness! ...... What do you make of it?

Third Lady (reading, through a glass)

"The battle strains us sorely; but resolve
"May save us even now. Our last attack
"Has failed, with fearful loss. Once more we strive".

A long silence in the room. Another rider is heard approaching, above the murmur of the gathering citizens. The second lady looks out.

Second Lady.

A straggler merely he ..... But they decide,
At last, to post his news for what it's worth.

Third Lady (reading again through her glass)

"The Duke of Brunswick, leading on a charge,
"Has met his death-wound. Schmettau, too, is slain;
"Prince William wounded. But we stand as yet,
"Engaging with the last of our reserves."

The agitation in the street communicates itself to the room. Some of the ladies weep silently as they wait, much longer this time.

Another horseman is heard clattering into the Platz, & they lean out again with painful eagerness.

Second Lady.

An adjutant of Marshal Moellendorf's,
If I define him rightly. Read – O read!
Though reading draw them from their socket-holes
Use your eyes now!

Third Lady (~~reading~~ scanning through her glass.)

As soon as 'tis affixed.....
Ah – this means much! The people's air & gait
Too well betray disaster. (Reading) "Berliners,
"The King has lost the battle! Bear it well.
"The foremost duty of a citizen
"Is to maintain a brave tranquillity.
"This is what I, the Governor, demand
"Of men & women now..... The King ~~[illegible]~~ still lives ~~[illegible]~~."

They turn from the window & sit in a silence broken only by monosyllabic words, bearing abstractedly the dismay without that has followed the previous excitement & hope.

The stagnation is ended by a cheering outside, of subdued emotional quality, mixed with sounds of grief. They again look forth. Queen Louisa is leaving the city with a very small escort, & the populace seem overcome. They strain their eyes after her as she disappears.

Enter Fourth Lady.

First Lady

How does she bear it? Whither does she go?

Fourth Lady.

She goes to join the King at Custrin, there
To abide events – as we. Her heroism
So schools her sense of her calamities
As out of grief to carve new queenliness,
And turn a mobile mien to statuesque,
Save for a sliding tear.

The Ladies leave the window severally.

Spirit Ironic.

33/D So the Will plays at flux & reflux still.
This monarchy, one half whose pedestal
Is built of Polish bones, has bones home-made!
Let the fair woman bear it. Poland did.

Spirit of the Years.

Meanwhile the mighty Emperor nears apace,
And soon will glitter at the city gates
With throbbing drums & rampant retinue.

An Evening mist cloaks the scene.

Scene VI

The Same.

It is a brilliant morning, with a fresh breeze, & ~~without~~ not a cloud. The open Platz & the adjoining streets are filled with dense crowds of citizens, in whose upturned faces curiosity has mastered consternation & grief.

Martial music is heard, at first faint, then louder, followed by a trampling of innumerable horses, & a clanking of arms & accoutrements. Through a street on the right hand of the view from the windows come troops of French dragoons heralding the arrival of Bonaparte.

Re-enter the room hurriedly & cross to the windows several ladies as before, some in tears.

FIRST LADY.

The kingdom late of Prussia, can it be
That thus it disappears? — a patriot-cry,
A battle, bravery, ruin; & no more?

SECOND LADY.

Thank God the Queen's gone!

THIRD LADY.

To what sanctuary?

From earthquake shocks ~~like these~~ there is no ~~refuge~~ sheltering cell! —

[indent] II Is this what men call conquest? Must it close
As his storied conquests do, or be annulled
By ~~force of~~ modern reason & the urbaner ~~sense~~ ~~[illegible]~~?—
Such issue none would venture to predict,
Yet folly 'twere to nourish foreshaped fears
And suffer in conjecture & in deed.—
If verily our country be dislimbed,
Then at the mercy of his domination
The face of earth will lie, & vessal kings
Stand waiting on himself the Overking,
Who ruling them rules all; till suffering
Sting & excite a bonded last resistance,
And work its own release.

Second Lady.

He comes even now
From sacrilege. I learn that since the fight
In marching here by Potsdam yesterday,
Sans-Souci Palace drew his curious feet,
Where even great Frederick's tomb was bared to him.

Fourth Lady.

All objects in the Palace — cared for, kept
Even as ~~things~~ they were when our arch-monarch died —
The books, the chair, the inkhorn, & the pen
He quizzed with flippant curiosity;

And entering where our hero's bones are urned
He seized the sword & standards treasured there,
And with a mixed effrontery & regard
Declared they should be all dispatched to Paris
As gifts to the Hôtel des Invalides.

On Lear [illegible] Lucas

Third Lady.

Such rodomontade is cheap: what matters it!

A galaxy of Marshals, forming Napoléon's staff, now enters the ~~[illegible]~~ Platz immediately before the windows. In the midst rides the Emperor himself. The ladies are silent. The procession passes along the front until it reaches the entrance to the Royal Palace. At the door Napoleon descends from his horse & goes into the building amid the resonant trumpetings of his soldiers, & the silence of the crowd.

Second Lady (impressed)

O why does such a man debase himself
By countenancing loud scurrility
Against a queen who cannot make reprise!
A power so ponderous needs no littleness —
The last resort of feeble desperates!

Enter more Ladies.

Fifth Lady (breathlessly)

Humiliation grows acuter still.
He issues placards to his soldiery

On their distress of us & our allies,
Declaring ~~he shall not lay down the~~ he'll not stack away his arms
Till he has choked the ~~eternal~~ remaining foes of France
In their own gainful glut. – Whom means he, think you?

First Lady.

Us?

Third Lady.

Russia? Austria?

Fifth Lady.

Neither. England, yea,
Her he still holds the master mischief-mind,
And marrer of the countries' quietude,
By exercising untold tyranny
Over all ports & seas.

Second Lady.

Then England's doomed!
When he has overturned the Russian rule,
England comes next for wrack. They say that know!.....
Look – he has entered by the Royal doors
And makes the Palace his. – Now let us go! –
Our course is – whither?

Exeunt Ladies.

The curtain drops temporarily.

Semichorus I of the Years. (aerial music)

Deeming himself omnipotent
With the Kings of the Christian continent,
To ~~sweep~~ ~~master~~ warder the ~~sea~~ ~~main~~ waves was his further bent.

Semichorus II.

But the ~~weaving~~ Will from eternity,
Working as race & ~~geography~~ a circling sea,
Had bidden the fleet of the Britons be.

Semichorus I.

The wane of his armaments, ill-advised,
At Trafalgar, to a force despised,
Was a wound which never has cicatrized.

Semichorus II.

This O this is the cramp that grips,
And ~~hinders~~ freezes the Emperor's finger-tips
From signing a peace with the Land of Ships.

Chorus.

The universal-empire plot
Demands the rule of that wave-walled spot;
And peace with England cometh not!

The scene reopens.

A lurid ~~light~~ gloom now envelopes the Platz & city; & ~~the voice of~~ Bonaparte is heard as from ~~within~~ the Palace:

Voice of Napoléon.

These monstrous violations being in train
Of law & national integrities
By English arrogance in things marine,
(Which dares to capture simple merchant-craft
In honest quest of harmless merchandize
For crime of kinship to a hostile power)
Our vast, effectual, & majestic strokes
In this unmatched campaign, enables me
To bar from commerce with the continent
All keels of English frame. Hence I decree:—

Spirit of Rumour

This outlines his renowned "Berlin Decree".
Maybe he meditates its scheme in sleep,
Or hints it to his suite, or dictates it
While shaping, to his scribes.

Voice of Napoléon (continuing)

All England's ports to suffer strict blockade:
All traffic with that land to cease forthwith;
All natives of her isles, wherever met,
To be detained as windfalls of the war.
All chattels of her make, material, mould,
To be good prize wherever pounced upon:
And never a bottom hailing from her shores
But shall be barred from every haven here.

This for her monstrous harms to human rights,
And arrogant dealings with her neighbour powers.

Spirit Sinister.

I spell here that our excellently high-coloured drama is not played out yet?

Spirit of the Years.

Nor will it be for many a month of moans,
And summer shocks, & winter-whitened bones.

The night gets darker, & the Palace outlines are lost.

Scene VII

Tilsit and the River Niemen.

The scene is viewed from the windows of Bonaparte's temporary quarters. Some subordinate officers of his suite are looking out upon it.

It is the day after midsummer, about one o'clock. A multitude of soldiery & spectators lines each bank of the broad river which, stealing slowly north-west, bears almost exactly in its midst a moored raft of bonded timber. On this as a base floor stands a gorgeous pavilion of draped woodwork, having at each

side, facing the respective banks of the stream, a round-headed doorway richly festooned. The cumbersome erection acquires from the current a rhythmical movement, as if it were breathing, & the breeze now & then produces a shiver on the face of the stream.

2 Lines
Attachment

Dumb Show.

On the south-west or Prussian side rides the Emperor Napoléon in uniform, attended by the Grand Duke of Berg, the Prince of Neufchâtel, Marshal Bessières, Duroc Marshal of the Palace, & Caulaincourt Master of the Horse. The Emperor looks well, but is growing fat. They embark on an ornamental barge in front of them, which immediately puts off. It is now apparent to the watchers that a precisely similar enactment has simultaneously taken place on the opposite or Russian bank, the chief figure being the Emperor Alexander – a graceful flexible man of thirty with a courteous manner & good-natured face. He has come out from an inn on that side, accompanied by the Grand Duke Constantine, General Bennigsen, General Ouwaroff, Prince Labanoff, & Adjutant-general Count Lieven.

The two barges draw towards the raft, reaching the opposite sides of it about the same time, amidst discharges of cannon. Each Emperor enters the door that faces him, & meeting in the centre of the pavilion they formally embrace each other. They retire together to the screened interior, the suite of each remaining in the outer half of the pavilion.

More than an hour passes while they are thus invisible. The French officers who have observed the scene from the lodging of Napoléon walk about idly, & ever & anon go curiously to the windows, again to watch the raft.

Chorus of the Years (aerial music)

The prelude to this smooth scene — mark well! — were the shocks whereof the times gave token
Vaguely to us ere last year's snows shut over Lithuanian pines & pools,
Which ~~tale~~ we told at the fall of the faded leaf, when the pride of Prussia was ~~rent and~~ bruised & broken,
And the Man of Adventure sat in the seat of the Man of Method and rigid Rule.

Semichorus I of the Pities

Snows incarnadined were thine, O Eylau, field of the wide white spaces,
And frozen lakes, & frozen limbs, & blood iced hard as it left the veins:
Steel-cased squadrons swathed in cloud-drift, plunging to ~~death~~ doom through pathless places,
And forty thousand dead & ~~nigh~~ near dead ~~[illegible]~~ strewing the early-nighted plains.

Semichorus II.

Friedland to there adds its tale of victims, its midnight marches & hot collisions,
~~And~~ Its plunge, at His word, on the enemy cooped by the bended river ~~the~~ and famed Mill-stream,
As he shatters the moves of the ~~[illegible]~~ loose-knit nations to curb his exploitful soul's ambitions,
And their great-Confedracy dissolves like the diorama of a dream.

Dumb show continues.

Napoléon & Alexander emerge from their seclusion, & each is beheld talking to the suite of his companion, apparently in flattering compliment. An effusive parting, which signifies itself to be but temporary, is followed by their return to the river shores amid the cheers of the spectators.

Napoléon & his marshals arrive at the door of his quarters, & enter, & pass out of sight to other rooms than that of the foreground, in which the observers are loitering. Dumb show ends.

A murmured conversation grows audible, carried on by ~~the~~ two persons in the crowd beneath the open windows. Their dress being the native one, & their tongue unfamiliar, they seem to the officers to be merely inhabitants gossiping, & their voices continue unheeded.

First English spy ⁂

Did you get much for me to send on?

Second English spy ⁂

I have got hold of the substance of their parley. Surely no truce in European annals ever led to so odd an interview. They were like a belle & her beau, by God! But queerly enough, one of Alexander's staff said to him as he reached the raft: "Sire, let me humbly ask you not to forget your father's fate!" Grim – eh?

⁂ It has been conjectured of late ~~to have been~~ that these adventurous spirits were Sir Robert Wilson &, possibly, Lord Hutchinson, at imminent risk of their lives.

First Spy.

Anything about the little island which shall be nameless?

Second Spy.

Much; & startling, too. "Why are we at war?" says Napoléon when they met. — "Ah — why?" said t'other. — "Well" said Boney, "I am fighting you only as an ally of the English, & you are simply serving them, & not yourself, in fighting me." — "In that case", says Alexander, "we shall soon be friends, for I owe her as great a grudge as you."

First Spy.

Dammy, go that length, did they!

Second Spy.

Then they plunged into the old story about English selfishness, & greed, & duplicity. But the climax related to Spain, & it amounted to this: they agreed that the Bourbons of the Spanish throne should be made to abdicate, & Bonaparte's relations set up as sovereigns instead of them.

First Spy

Somebody must ride like hell to let ~~the~~ our Cabinet know!

Second Spy.

I have written it down in cipher, not to trust to memory, & to guard against accidents. — They also agreed that France should have the Pope's dominions, Malta, & Egypt; that Napoléon's brother Joseph should have Sicily as well as Naples, & that they would partition the Ottoman Empire between them.

First Spy.

Cutting up Europe like a plum-pudding. Par nobile fratrum!

Second Spy.

Then the worthy pair came to poor Prussia, whom Alexander, they say, was anxious about, as he is under engagements to her. It seems that Napoléon agrees to restore to the King as many of his States as will cover Alexander's promise, so that the Tsar may feel free to strike out in this new line with his new friend.

First Spy.

Surely this is but surmise?

Second Spy.

Not at all. One of the suite overheard, & I got round him. There was much more, which I did not learn. But they are going to soothe & flatter the unfortunate King & Queen by asking them to a banquet here.

First Spy.

Such a spirited woman will never come!

Second Spy.

We shall see. ~~Poverty~~ Whom necessity compels, needs must; & she has gone through an Iliad of woes!

First Spy.

It is this Spanish business that will stagger England by God! And now to let her know it.

French ~~Officer~~ subaltern (looking out above)

What are those townspeople talking about so earnestly I wonder?
The lingo ~~here~~ of this place has an accent akin to English.

Second ~~Officer~~ subaltern.

No doubt because the races are both Teutonic.

The spies disappear in the crowd.

The curtain drops.

II. A. Mousseau
Heslop

Scene VIII.

The Same.

The midsummer sun is low, & a long table in the aforeshown apartment is ~~ornamentally~~ laid out for a dinner, among other decorations being ~~a~~ bunches of the season's roses.

At the vacant end of the room (divided from the dining end by folding doors, now open) there are discovered the Emperor Napoléon, the Grand Duke Constantine, Prince Henry of Prussia, the Prince Royal of Bavaria, the Grand Duke of Berg, & attendant officers.

Enter the Tsar Alexander. Napoléon welcomes him, & the twain move apart from the rest, Bonaparte placing a chair for his visitor & flinging himself down on another.

Napoléon.

The comforts I can offer are not great,
Nor is the accommodation more than scant
That falls to me for hospitality;
But, as it is, accept.

Alexander.

It serves me well.
And to embrace the bondages of state
Is as ~~sweet~~ clear air to incense-stifled souls.
What of the Queen?

Napoléon.

She's coming with the King.
We have some quarter-hour to spare or more
Before their Majesties are timed for us.

Alexander.

Good. I would speak of them. That she should show here
After the late events, betokens much!
Abasement in so proud a woman's heart
Is not without a touch of painfulness, (*His voice grows tremulous*)
And I beseech you, sire, that you hold out
Some soothing hope to her?

Napoléon.

I have, already! —
~~Again~~ Now, sire, to those affairs we entered on:

Strong friendship, grown secure, bids me repeat
That you ~~[illegible]~~ have been much duped by your allies.

Alexander shows mortification.

Prussia's a shuffler, England a self-seeker,
Nobility has shone in you alone.
Your error grew of over-generous dreams,
And misbeliefs by dullard ministers.
By treating personally we speed affairs
More in an hour than they in ~~month's~~(?) blundering.
Between us two, henceforth, must stand no third.
There's ~~danger~~ peril in it, while England's mean ambition
Still works to get us skewered by the ears;
And in this view your ~~[illegible]~~ chiefs-of-Staff concur.

Alexander.

The judgment of my officers I share.

Napoléon.

To recapitulate. Nothing can greaten you
Like this alliance. Providence has flung
My good friend Sultan Selim from his throne,
Leaving me free in dealings with the Porte;
And I discern the hour as one to end
A rule that ~~can~~ Time no longer ~~will~~ lets cohere.
If I abstain, its spoils will go to swell
The power of this same England, our annoy,
That ~~Lower~~ country which enchains the trade of towns

To such extent as to monopolize,
Among the rest, the whole of Petersburg's—
Ay!—through her purse, friend, as the lender there!—
~~Threaten~~ Shutting that purse, they may incite to—what?
Muscovy's fall, its ruler's murdering.
Their fleet at any minute can encoop
Yours in the Baltic; in the Black Sea, too;
And keep you snug as minnows in a glass!
Hence we, fast-fellowed by our mutual foes,
Seaward the British, Germany by land,
And having compassed, for our common good,
The Turkish Empire's due partitioning,
As comrades can conjunctly rule the world
To its own gain, & our eternal fame!

Alexander (stirred & flushed)

I see vast prospects opened!—Yet, in truth,
Ere you, sire, broached these themes, their outlines loomed
Not rarely in my own imaginings;
But with less clear a vision than endows
So great a captain, statesman, philosoph,
As centre in yourself; whom had I known
Sooner by some few years, months, even weeks,
I had been spared full many a fault of rule.
—Now as to Austria. Should we call her in?

Napoléon.

Two in a bed I have slept, but never three.

Alexander.

Ha-ha! Delightful. And, then nextly, Spain?

Napoléon.

I lighted on some letters at Berlin,
Wherein King Carlos offered to attack me.
A Bourbon, minded thus, ~~is over near~~ so near as Spain,
~~To me in Spain~~ Is dangerous stuff. He must be seen to soon!.....
A draft, then, of our treaty being penned,
We will peruse it later. If King George
Will not, upon the terms there offered him,
Conclude a ready peace, he ~~must~~ can be forced.
Trumpet yourself as France's firm ally,
And Austria will be fain to do the same:
England, left ~~naked~~ nude to such joint ~~attack [illegible]~~ harassment,
Must shiver — fall.

Alexander (with naïve enthusiasm)

It is a great alliance!

Napoléon.

Would it were one in blood ~~no less than power~~ as well as brain —
~~My~~ Of family ~~ties~~ hopes, & sweet domestic bliss!

Alexander.

Ah — is it to my sister you refer?

Napoléon.

The founding of a lineal dynasty
Has been much thrust upon me, much, of late,
For reasons which I will not dwell on now.
State counsellors, my brother Joseph, too,
Urge that I loose the Empress by divorce,
And re-wive promptly for the country's good.
~~Ay, even pain~~ Princesses even have been named for me! —
However this, to-day, is premature,
And 'twixt ourselves alone.....
The Queen of Prussia must ere long be here:
Berthier escorts her. And the King, too, comes.
She's one whom you admire?

Alexander (reddening ingenuously)
yes.... Formerly
I had — did feel that some faint fascination
Vaguely adorned her form. And, to be plain,
Certain reports have been calumnious,
And wronged an honest woman.

Napoleon
As I knew.
But she is wearing thready: why, her years
Must be full one-&-thirty, ~~~~ at the least.

Alexander (quickly)
No, sire. She's twentynine. If traits ~~tell~~ teach more

It means that ~~crushing~~ cruel memory gnaws at her,
As fair inciter to that fatal war
Which broke her to the dust! ..... I do confess
(Since now we speak on't) that this sacrifice
Prussia is doomed to, still disquiets me.
Unhappy King! When I recall the oaths
Sworn him upon great Frederick's sepulchre,
And – and my promises to his sad queen,
It pricks me that his realm & revenues
Should be stript down to the mere half they were!

Bishop
Mr Clory

Napoléon (coolly)

Believe me, 'tis but my regard for you
Which lets me leave him that! Far easier 'twere
To leave him none at all.

He rises & goes to the window

But here they are.
No: it's the Queen alone, with Berthier
As I directed. Then the King will follow.

Alexander.

Let me, Sire, trust your kindness to address
Some gentle words to her?

Napoléon.

Ay, ay: I will.

Enter Queen Louisa of Prussia on the arm of Berthier. She appears in majestic garments & with a smile on her lips, so that her still great fairness is impressive. But her eyes bear traces of tears. She accepts Napoléon's attentions with the stormily sad air of a wounded beauty. Whilst she is being received the King arrives. He is a plain, shy, honest-faced, awkward man, with a wrecked & solitary look. His manner to Napoléon is, nevertheless, dignified, & even stiff.

The company move into the inner half of the room where the tables are, & the folding-doors being shut they seat themselves at dinner, the Queen taking a place between Napoléon & Alexander.

Napoléon.

Madame, I love magnificent attire;
But in the present instance can but note
That each bright knot & jewel less adorns
The brighter wearer than the wearer it!

Queen (with a sigh)

You praise one, Sire, whom now the circling world
Has learnt to cease from praising! But such words
From such a quarter are of worth no less.

Napoléon.

Of worth as candour, Madame; not as guage.
Your reach in that respect outsoars my scope.
Yet, do you know, a troop of my hussars,

That last October day, nigh captured you!

Queen

Nay. Never a single Frenchman did I see!

Napoléon.

Not less was it that you exposed yourself,
And should have been protected. But at Weimar,
Had you but sought me, 'twould have bettered you.

Queen.

I had no zeal to meet you, sire, alas!

Napoleon (after a silence)

And how at Memel do you [redacted] sport with time?

Queen.

Sport? I! – I pore on musty chronicles,
And muse on usurpations long forgot,
And other historied dramas of high wrong!

Napoléon.

Why con not annals of your own rich age?
They treasure acts well fit for pondering.

Queen.

I am reminded too much of my age
By having had to live in it. May Heaven
Defend me now, & my wan ghost anon,
From conning it again!

Napoléon

Alas, alas,
Too grievous, this, for one who is yet a queen!

Queen.

No: I have cause for vials more than this! —
Prussia was blind in blazoning her power
Against the Mage of France. . . . .
The embers of great Frederick's deeds inflamed her:
His glories swelled her to her ruining.
Too well has she been punished. (A pause)

Alexander (in a low voice, looking anxiously at her)
Say not so.
You speak as all were lost. Things are not thus!
Such desperation has unreason in it
And make hearts bleed that crave to comfort you.

Napoléon (to the King)
I trust the treaty, further pondered, sire,
Has consolations?

King (curtly)
I am a luckless man;
And muster strength to bear my lucklessness
Without vain hope of consolations ~~here~~ now.
One thing, at least, I trust I have shown you, sire,
That I provoked not this calamity!

At Anspach first my feud with you began –
Anspach, my Eden, violated & shamed
By blushless tramplings of your legions there!

Napoléon.

It's rather late, methinks, to talk thus now!

King (with more choler)

Never too late for truth & plain speaking!

Napoléon (blandly)

To your ally, the Tsar, I must refer you.
He was it, & not I, who tempted you
To push for war, when Eylau must have shown
You every profit to have lain in peace. –
He can indemn; yes, much or small; & may.

King (with a head-shake)

I would make up, would well make up, my mind
To half my kingdom's loss, could in such limb
But Magdeburg not lie. Dear Magdeburg,
Place of my heart-hold; that I would retain!

Napoléon.

Our words take not such pattern as is wont
To grace occasions of festivity.

[He turns brusquely from the King.

The banquet proceeds with a more general conversation, when

finished a toast is proposed: "The Freedom of the Seas"; & drunk with enthusiasm.

Spirit Sinister.

J M Close
II Ph Dr

Another hit at England & her tubs!
I hear harsh echoes from her chalky chines.

Spirit of the Pities.

O heed not England now! Still ~~read~~ read the Queen.
One grieves to see her spend her pretty spells
Upon the man who has so slandered her!

They rise from table, & the folding doors being opened they pass into the adjoining part of the room.

Here are now assembled Murat, Talleyrand, Kourakin, Kalkreuth, Berthier, Bessières, Caulaincourt, Labanoff, Bennigsen, & others. Napoléon having spoken a few words here & there resumes his conversation with Queen Louisa, & parenthetically offers snuff to the Countess Voss, her lady-in-waiting. Talleyrand, who has observed Napoléon's growing interest in the Queen, contrives to get near him.

Talleyrand (in a whisper)

Sire, is it possible that you can bend
To let one woman's fairness suck from you
All the resplendent fortune that attends
The grandest victory of your grand career?

The Queen's quick eyes observes & flashes at the whisper; & she

obtains a word with the minister.

Queen (sarcastically)
I should infer, dear Monsieur Talleyrand,
Only two persons in the world regret
My having come to Tilsit.

Talleyrand
Madame, two?
Can any! — Who may such sad rascals be?

Queen.
You, & myself, Prince. (gravely) Yes! myself & you.
(Talleyrand's face become impassive, & he does not reply.

The Queen prepares to leave, & Napoléon rejoins her.

Napoleon (taking a rose from a vase)
Dear Queen, do pray accept this little token
As souvenir of me before you go?

He offers her the rose, with his hand on his heart. She hesitates, but accepts it.

Queen (impulsively, with waiting tears)
Let Magdeburg come with it, Sire! O yes!

Napoleon (with sudden frigidity)
It is for you to take what I can give.

And I give this – no more. ⁘

She turns her head to hide her emotion, & withdraws. Napoléon steps up to her, & offers his arm. She takes it silently, & he perceives the tears on her cheeks. They cross towards the ante-room, away from the other guests.

Napoléon (softly)

Still weeping, dearest lady! Why is this?

Queen (seizing his hand & pressing it)

Your speeches darn the tearings of your sword! –
Between us two, as man & woman now,
Is't even possible you question why!
O why did not the Greatest of the Age –
Of future ages, & all ages past,
This one time win a woman's worship – yea,
For all her little life!

Napoléon (gravely)

Know you, my fair,
That I – ay, I – in this deserve your pity! –
Some force within me, baffling ~~his keen~~ mine intent,
~~Spirits~~ ~~Drives~~ Harries me onward, whether I will or no.
My star, my star is what's to blame – not I!
~~Some force within me~~
It is unswervable!

⁘ The traditional present of the rose was probably on this occasion, though it is not quite matter of certainty.

Queen.

Then now, alas,
My duty's done as mother, wife, & queen.—
I'll say no more — but that my heart is broken!

Exeunt Napoléon, Queen, & Lady-in-waiting.

Spirit of the Years.

He spoke thus at the Bridge of Lodi. Strange,
He's of the few in Europe who discern
The working of the Will!

Spirit of the Pities.

If that be so,
Better for Europe lacked he such discerning!

Napoléon returns to the room & joins Talleyrand.

Napoléon (aside to his minister)

My God, it was touch & go that time, Talleyrand! She was within an ace of getting over me. As she stepped into the carriage she said in her pretty way, "O I have been cruelly deceived by you!" And when she sank down inside, not knowing I heard, she burst into sobs fit to move a statue. The Devil take me if I hadn't a good mind to stop the horses, call her back, give her a good kissing, & agree to all she wanted. Ha-ha, well; a miss is as good as a mile. Had she come sooner with those sweet beseeching blue eyes of hers, who knows what might not have happened! But she didn't come sooner, & I have kept in my right mind.

The Russian Emperor, the King of Prussia, & other guests advance to bid adieu. They depart severally. When they are gone Napoleon turns to Talleyrand.

Adhere, then, to the treaty as it stands:
Change not therein a single article,
But write it fair forthwith.

Exeunt Napoléon, Talleyrand, & other ministers, & officers in waiting.

Shade of the Earth.

Some surly voice afar I heard by now,
Of an enisled Britannic quality;
Wots any of the cause?

Spirit Ironic

Perchance I do!
Britain is roused, in her slow stolid style,
By Bonaparte's pronouncement at Berlin
Against her cargoes, commerce, life itself;
And now from out her watery citadel
Blows counterblasting "Orders". Rumours, tell.

Rumour I.

"From havens of fierce France & her allies,
"With poor or precious freight of merchandise
"Whoso adventures, England pounds as prize!"

Rumour II.

Thereat Napoléon names her, furiously,
Curst Oligarch, Arch-pirate of the sea,
Who shall lack room to live while liveth he!

Chorus of the Pities (aerial music)

And peoples are ~~entrapped~~ enmeshed in new calamity!

Curtain of Evening Shades.

A. Jones
McLean

Act Second.

Scene I.

The Pyrenees & valleys adjoining.

The view is from upper air, immediately over the region that lies between Bayonne on the north, Pampeluna on the south, & San Sebastian on the west, including a portion of the Cantabrian mountains. The month is February, & snow covers not only the peaks but the lower slopes. The roads over the passes are well beaten.

Dumb Show.

At various elevations multitudes of Napoleon's soldiery, to the number of about thirty thousand, are discerned in a creeping progress across the frontier from the French to the Spanish side. The thin long columns serpentine along the roads, but are sometimes broken, while at others they disappear altogether behind vertical rocks & overhanging woods. The heavy guns & the whitey-brown tilts of the baggage waggons seem the largest objects in the procession, which are dragged laboriously up the inclines to the watershed, their lumbering being audible as high as the clouds.

Simultaneously the river Bidassoa, in a valley to the west, is being crossed by a train of artillery & another thirty-thousand men, all forming part of the same systematic advance.

Along the great highway through Biscay the wondering native carters draw their sheep-skinned ox-teams aside, to let the regiments pass, & stray groups of peaceable field-workers in Navarre look inquiringly at the marching & prancing progress.

Time passes, & the various frontier strongholds are approached by these legions. Their governors emerge at a summons, & when seeming explanations have been given the unwelcome comers are doubtfully admitted.

The chief places to which entrance is thus obtained are Pampeluna & San Sebastian at this end, & far away towards the shining horizon of the Mediterranean, Figueras and Barcelona.

Dumb show concludes as the mountain-mists close over.

Scene II.

Aranjuez. A room in the Palace of Godoy, the "Prince of Peace".

A private chamber is disclosed, richly furnished with paintings, vases, mirrors, silk hangings, gilded lounges, & several lutes of rare workmanship. The hour is midnight, the room being lit by screened candelabra. In the centre at the back of the scene is a large window heavily curtained.

Godoy & the Queen Maria Luisa are dallying on a sofa. The Prince of Peace is a fine handsome man in middle life, with curled hair & a mien of easy good-nature. The Queen is older, but looks younger in the dim light, from the lavish use of beautifying arts. She has pronounced features, dark eyes, low brows, black hair bound by a jewelled band or snood, & brought forward 65/7
in curls over her forehead & temples, long heavy earrings, an open bodice, & sleeves puffed at the shoulders. A cloak & other mufflers lie on a chair beside her.

Godoy (after a silence)

The Life-guards still insist, Love, that the King
Shall not leave Aranjuez.

Queen.

Let them insist.
Whether we stay, or whether we depart,

Napoléon soon draws hither with his hosts!

Godoy

He says he comes pacifically..... But no!

Queen.

Dearest, we must away to Andalusia,
Thence to America when time shall serve.

Godoy.

I hold seven thousand men to cover us,
And ships in Cadiz port. But then – the Prince
Flatly declines to go. He lauds the French
As true deliverers.

Queen.

Ferdinand must go!....
O my sweet friend, that we – our sole two selves –
Could but escape & leave the rest to fate,
And in a western bower dream out our days; –
For the King's glass can run but briefly now,
Shattered & shaken as his vigour is. –
But ah – your love is not in singleness!
Why, friend, caress Josefa Tudó still?
She does not fling her soul on yours as I!
And why those others even more than her?....
How little own I in thee!

Godoy.

Such must be.
I cannot quite forsake them. Don't forget
The same scope has been yours in former years.

Queen

Yes, Love; I know. I yield! You cannot leave them.
But if you ever would bethink yourself
How long I have been yours, how truly all
Those other pleasures were my desperate shifts
To soften sorrow at your absences.
You would be faithful to me!

Godoy.

True, my dear.—
Yet I ~~do passably devote me~~ ~~devote me fairly long~~ [stick fast] [well] to you,
And ~~lead~~ [squire] you with some regularity;—
A week beside you, & a week away.
Such is not done without some risk & strain.—
And you agreed ~~the Doña~~ [Thereza] should be mine,
~~Also Thereza~~ [And, too, the Doña], without jealousy.

(A noise is heard without)

Ah, what means that?

He jumps up from her side & crosses the room to a window, where he lifts the curtain cautiously.

Queen (following him, with a scared look)

A riot can it be?

Godoy.

~~Come inside here or they will see the light.~~
Let me put ~~out~~ these out, ere they notice them:
They think me at the Royal Palace yonder.

He hastily extinguishes the candles except one taper, which he places in a recess, ~~She goes round the hangings, & enclosing her with his arm he &~~ so that the room is in shade. He then draws back the curtains, & she joins him at ~~she look out together.~~ the window, where, enclosing her with his arm, he & she look out together.

In front of the house a guard of hussars is stationed, beyond them spreading the Pláza or Square. On the other side rises in the lamplight the white front of the Royal Palace. To the left of the Palace is a wall enclosing gardens, bowered alleys, & orange groves, & in the wall a small door.

A mixed multitude of soldiery & populace fills the space in front of the King's Palace, & they shout & address each other vehemently. During a lull in their vociferations is heard the unperturbed purl of the Tagus over a cascade in the Palace grounds.

Queen.

Lingering, we've risked ~~our~~ too long chance of flight!
The Paris Terror will repeat it here.
Not for myself I fear. No, no; for thee! (she clings to him.)
If they should hurt you, it would murder me
By heartbleedings & stabs intolerable!

Godoy (kissing her)

The first thought now is how to get you back
Within the Palace walls. Why would you risk
To come here on a night so critical!

Queen (passionately)

I could not help it — nay, I would not help!
Rather than starve my soul I venture all. —
Our last love-night — last, maybe, of long years.
Why do you chide me now!

Godoy.

Dear Queen, I do not:
I shape these sharp regrets but for your sake.
Hence you must go, somehow, & quickly too!
They think not yet of you in threatening thus,
But of me solely..... Where does your lady wait?

Queen.

Below. One servant with her. They are true,
And can be let know all. But you — but you!
(Uproar continues.)

Godoy.

I can escape. Now call them. All three cloak
And veil as when you came.

They retreat into the room. Queen María Luisa's lady-in-waiting & servant are summoned. Enter both. All three then muffle themselves up, & Godoy prepares to conduct the Queen downstairs.

Queen.

Nay, now! I will not have it. We are safe;

think of yourself. Can you get out behind?

~~Mr Lean~~
B. Lucas

Godoy.

I judge so — when I have done what is needful here. —
The mob knows not the bye-door — slip across;
Thence around sideways. All's clear there as yet.

(The Queen, lady-in-waiting, & servant go out hurriedly.

Godoy looks again from the window. The mob is some way off, the immediate front being for the moment nearly free of ~~people~~ loiterers; & the three muffled figures are visible crossing without hindrance towards the door in the wall of the Palace Gardens. The instant they reach it a sentinel springs up, ~~stopping~~ challenging them.

Godoy.

Ah — now they are doomed. My God, why did she come!

A parley takes place. Something, apparently a bribe, is handed to the sentinel, & the three are allowed to slip in, the Queen having obviously been unrecognized. He breathes his relief.

Now for the others. Then — ah, then ~~God~~ Heaven knows!

He sounds a bell & a servant enters.

Where is the Countess of Castillofiel?

Servant

She's looking for you, Prince.

Godoy.

Find her at once.

Ah – here she is. That's well. – Go watch the Plaza (to Servant)

~~[Exit servant~~

The Doña Josefa Tudó enters. She is a young & beautiful woman, the vivacity of whose large dark eyes is now clouded. She is wrapped up for flight. The servant goes out.

Josefa (breathlessly)

I should have joined you sooner, but I knew
The Queen was fondling with you. She must needs
Come hampering you this night of all the rest,
As if not gorged with you at other times!

Godoy.

Don't, pretty one! Needless it is in you,
Being so well aware who holds my love. –
I could not check her coming, since she would.
You well know how the old thing is, & how
I am compelled to let her have her mind.

He kisses her repeatedly.

Josefa.

But look, the mob is swelling! Pouring in
By thousands from Madrid – & all afoot.
Will they not come on hither from the King's?

Godoy.

Not just yet, maybe. You should have sooner fled!

The coach is waiting & the baggage packed.

(He again peers out)

Yes, there the coach is; & the clamourers near,

Led by Montijo, if I see aright.

Yes, they cry "Uncle Peter!" – that means him.

There will be time yet. Now I'll take you down,

~~So far as I may venture unperceived~~.

~~But stay within the gate~~.

~~[illegible]~~

(They leave the room.

In a few minutes Godoy, having taken her down, re-enters & again looks out. Josefa's coach is moving off with a small escort of Godoy's guards of honour. A sudden yelling begins, & the crowd rushes up & stops the vehicle. An altercation ensues.

Crowd.

Uncle Peter, it is the Favourite carrying off Prince ~~Ferdinand~~ Fernando. Stop him!

Josefa (putting her head out of the coach)

Silence their uproar, please, Señor Count of Montijo! It is a lady only, the Countess of Castillofiel.

Montijo

Let her pass, let her pass, friends! It is only that pretty wench of his, Pepa Tudó, who calls herself a Countess. Our titles are put to comical uses in these days. We shall catch the cock-bird presently!

Crowd (to each other)

The King & Queen & ~~Ferdinand~~ Fernando are at their own Palace – not here!

The Doña Josefa's carriage is allowed to pass on, as a shout from some who have remained before the Royal Palace attracts the attention of the multitude, which surges back thither.

Crowd.

Call out the King & the Prince. Long live the King! He shall not go. He is gone! Let us see him! He shall abandon Godoy!

The clamour at the Royal Palace still increasing, a figure emerges upon a balcony, whom Godoy recognizes by the lamplight to be Ferdinando Prince of Asturias. He can be seen waving his hand. The mob grows suddenly silent.

Ferdinando (in a shaken voice)

Citizens, the King my father is in the palace with the Queen. He has been much tried to-day.

Crowd.

Promise, sire, that he shall not leave us. Promise!

Ferdinando.

I do. I promise in his name. He has mistaken you, thinking you wanted his head. He knows better now.

Crowd

The villain Godoy misrepresented us to him! Throw out the Prince of Peace!

Ferdinando

He is not here, my friends.

Crowd.

Then the King shall announce to us that he has dismissed him! Let us see him. The King, the King!

Ferdinando goes in. King Carlos comes out reluctantly, & bows to their cheering. He produces a paper with a trembling hand.

King (reading)

"As it is the wish of the people —"

Crowd.

Speak up, your Majesty!

King (more loudly)

"As it is the wish of the people, I release Don Manuel Godoy, Prince of Peace, from the posts of Generalissimo of the Army & Grand Admiral of the Fleet, & give him leave to withdraw whither he pleases."

Crowd.

Huzza!

King

Citizens, to-morrow the decree is to be posted in Madrid.

Crowd.

Huzza! Long life to the King, & death to Godoy!

King Carlos disappears from the balcony, & the populace, still increasing in numbers, look towards Godoy's mansion, as if deliberating how to attack it. Godoy retreats into the room, & gazing round

him starts. A pale, worn, but placid lady, in a sombre though elegant robe stands there in the gloom. She is Thereza of Bourbon, the Princess of Peace.

Dn Abbey — Princess.

It is only your unhappy wife, Manuel. She will not hurt you!

Godoy (shrugging his shoulders)

Nor will they hurt you! Why did you not stay in the Royal Palace. You would have been more comfortable there.

Princess.

I don't recognize why you should specially value my comfort. You have saved your real wives. How can it matter what happens to your titular one?

Godoy.

Much, dear. I always play fair. But it being your blest privilege not to need my saving I was left free to practise it on those who did. (Mob heard approaching) Would that I were in no more danger than you!

Princess.

Puf!

He again peers out. His guard of hussars stands firmly in front of the mansion; but the Life-guards from the adjoining barracks, who have joined the people, endeavour to break the hussars of Godoy. A shot is fired. Godoy's guard yields, & the gate & door are battered in.

Crowd (without)

Murder him! Murder him! Death to Manuel Godoy!

They are heard rushing into the house.

Princess.

Go, I beseech you! You can do nothing for me, & I pray you to save yourself! The heap of mats in the lumber-room will hide you!

Godoy hastes to a private door, returns, kisses her, & exit.

His wife sits down & fans herself. She hears the crowd trampling up the stairs, but she does not move, & in a moment people burst in. The leaders are armed with stakes, daggers, & various improvised weapons, & some guards in undress appear with halberds.

First Citizen (peering into the dim light)

Where is he? Murder him! (noticing the Princess) Come, where is he?

Princess.

The Prince of Peace is gone. I know not where.

Second Citizen

Who is this lady?

Lifeguardsman.

Manuel Godoy's Princess.

Citizens (uncovering)

Princess, a thousand pardons grant us! — you

An injured wife – an injured people we!
Common misfortune makes us more than kin.
No single hair of yours shall suffer harm.

The Princess bows.

First Citizen.

But this, Señora, is no place for you,
~~Since~~ For we mean mischief here! Yet first will grant
Safe conduct for you to the Palace Gates,
Or elsewhere, as you wish.

Princess.

My wish is nought.
Do what you will with me. But he's not here.

Several of them form an escort, & accompany her from the room & out of the house. Those remaining, now a great throng, ~~light the candles, &~~ begin searching the room, & in bands invade other parts of the mansion.

Some Citizens (returning)

It is no use searching. She said he was not here, & she's a woman of honour.

First Citizen (drily)

She's his wife.

They leave the room for another search; but return still baffled.

Several Citizens.

He must have slipped out somehow! Smash his nicknacks, since we can't smash him!

They begin knocking the furniture to pieces, tearing down the hangings, trampling on the musical instruments, & kicking holes through the paintings they have unhung from the walls. These, with clocks, vases, carvings, & other moveables, they throw out of the window, till the chamber is a scene of utter wreck & desolation. In the stir a musical box is swept off a table, & starts playing as it falls on the floor.

Enter the Count of Montijo.

Montijo.

Stop, friends; stop this! There is no sense in it:—
It shows but useless spite! I have much to say:
The French Ambassador, de Beauharnais,
Has come, & sought the King. And next Murat,
With thirty thousand men, half cavalry,
Is closing in upon our doomed Madrid.
I know not what he means, this Bonaparte;
He makes pretence to gain us Portugal,
But what want we with her? 'Tis like as not
His aim's to noose us vassals all to him!
The King will abdicate, & shortly too,
As those will live to see who live not long.—
We have saved our nation from the Favourite,
But who is going to save us from our Friend?

The mob desists dubiously & goes out; the musical box upon the floor plays on, the taper burns to its socket, & the room becomes wrapt in the shades of night.

Scene III.

London. The Marchioness of Salisbury's

A large reception-room is disclosed, arranged for a conversazione. It is an evening in June, & at present the chamber is empty & in gloom. At one end is an elaborate device, representing Britannia offering her assistance to Spain, & at the other a figure of Time crowning the Spanish patriots' flag with laurel.

Spirit of the Years.

O chroniclers of human welterings,
Relate how Europe's madding movement brings
This frivolous haunt into the ~~[illegible]~~ path of palpitating things!

Recording Angels (chanting)

I.

The Spanish King has bowed unto the Fate
Which bade him abdicate.
The sensual Queen, whose passionate caprice
Has held her chambering with "the Prince of Peace",
[And wrought the Bourbons' fall,
Holds to her Love in all;
And Bonaparte has ruled that his & he
Henceforth displace the Bourbon dynasty.

II.

The Spanish people, handled in such sort,
As chattels of a court,
Dream dreams of England. Messengers are sent
In secret to the assembled Parliament,
In faith that England's hand
Would stouten them to stand,
And crown a cause which, both they, bond & free
Must advocate enthusiastically.

Spirit of the Years.

So the Will heaves through space, & moulds the times,
With mortals for Its fingers! We shall see
Again men's passions, virtues, visions, crimes
Obey resistlessly
The purposive, unmotived, dominant Thing
Which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring!

In Albany Manor

The reception-room is lighted up, & the hostess comes in. There arrive ambassadors & their wives, the Dukes & Duchesses of Rutland & Somerset, the Marquis & Marchioness of Stafford, the Earls of Stair, Westmoreland, Gower, Essex, Viscounts & Viscountesses Cranley & Morpeth, Viscount Melbourne, Lord & Lady Kinnaird, Baron de Rolle, Lady Charles Greville, the Ladies Cavendish, Mr & Mrs Thomas Hope, Mr Gunning, Mrs Fitzherbert, & many other notable personages. Lastly she goes to the door to welcome severally the Prince of Wales, the Princes of France, & the Princess Castelcicala.

Lady Salisbury (to the Prince of Wales)

I am sorry to say, Sir, that the Spanish patriots are not yet arrived. I doubt not but that they have been delayed by their ignorance of the town, & will soon be here.

Prince of Wales.

No hurry whatever, my dear hostess. Gad, we've enough to talk about! I understand that the arrangement between our ministers & these noblemen will include the liberation of Spanish prisoners in this country, & the providing 'em with arms, to go back & fight for their independence.

Lady Salisbury.

It will be a blessed event if they do check the career of this infamous Corsican. I have just heard that that poor foreigner Guillet de la Gevrillière, who proposed to Mr Fox to assassinate him, died a miserable death a few days ago in the Bicetre – probably by torture, though nobody knows. Really one almost wishes Mr Fox had – . O here they are!

Enter the Spanish Viscount de Materosa & Don Diego de la Vega. They are introduced by Captain Hill & Mr Bagot who escort them. Lady Salisbury presents them to the Prince & others.

Prince of Wales.

By Gad, Viscount, we were just talking of 'ee. You have had some adventures in getting to this country?

Materosa (assisted by Bagot as interpreter)

Sire, it has indeed been a trying experience for us. But here we are, impressed by a deep sense of gratitude for the signal marks of attachment your country shows us.

Prince of Wales.

You represent, practically, the Spanish people?

Materosa.

We are immediately deputed, sire,
By the Assembly of Asturias.
More following soon from other provinces.
We bring official writings, charging us
To solder any Treaties with this realm
That may promote our cause against the foe.
Next, a letter to your gracious King;
Also a Proclamation, soon to sound
And swell all hearts in the Peninsula,
Declaring that the act by which King Carlos
And his son Ferdinand did abdicate
To whomso that Napoleon might appoint,
Being an act of force & not of choice
Unfetters us from our allegiant oath.

Mrs Fitzherbert.

The usurpation began, I suppose, with the divisions in the Royal Family?

Materosa.

Yes, madame, & the protection they foolishly requested from the Emperor,

& their timid intent of flying, secretly helped it on. It was an opportunity he had been awaiting for years.

Mrs Fitzherbert.

All brought about by this man Godoy, Prince of Peace!

Prince of Wales.

Dash my wig, mighty much you know about it, Maria! Why, sure, Boney thought to himself, "This Spain is a pretty place; 'twill just suit me as an extra acre or two; so here goes."

Don Diego (aside to Bagot)

This lady is the Princess of Wales?

Bagot.

Hsh! No, Señor. The Princess lives at large at Kensington & other places, & her parties of her own, & doesn't keep house with her husband. This lady is — well, really his wife, you know, in the opinion of many; but —

Don Diego.

Ah! Things a little awry, as they were at our court! She's the Pepa Tudó to this Prince of Peace?

Bagot.

O no — not exactly that, Señor.

Don Diego.

Ya, ya. Good. I'll be careful, my friend. You are not saints in

England more than we are in Spain!

Bagot.

We are not. Only you sin with naked faces, & we with masks on.

Don Diego.

Virtuous country!

Duchess of Rutland.

It was understood that Ferdinand Prince of Asturias was to marry a French princess, & so unite the countries peacefully.

Materosa.

It was. And our credulous prince was tempted to meet Napoléon at Bayonne. Also the poor simple King, & the infatuated Queen, & Manuel Godoy.

Duchess of Rutland

Then Godoy escaped from Aranjuez?

Materosa.

Yes, by hiding in the garret. Then they all threw themselves upon Napoléon's protection. In his presence the Queen swore that the King was not Ferdinand's father! Altogether they form a queer little menagerie. What will happen to them nobody knows.

Prince of Wales.

And do you wish us to send an army at once?

Materosa.

What we most want, sire, are arms & ammunition. But we

leave the English Ministry to co-operate in its own wise way, anyhow so as to sustain us in resenting these insults from the Tyrant of the Earth.

~~Masova~~ Kistof

Duchess of Rutland (to the Prince of Wales)

What sort of aid shall we send, sir?

Prince of Wales.

We are going to vote fifty millions & hear. We'll whack him, & preserve your noble country for 'ee, Señor Viscount. The debate thereon is to come off to-morrow. It will be the finest thing the Commons have had since Pitt's time. Sheridan, who is to open it, says he & Canning are to be absolutely unanimous; & by God, like the parties in his "Critic", when Government & Opposition do agree, their unanimity is wonderful. Viscount Materosa, you & your friends must be in the Gallery. O dammy, you must!

Materosa.

Sire, we are already pledged to be there.

Prince of Wales.

And hark ye, Señor Viscount. You will then learn what a mighty fine thing a debate in the English Parliament is! No Continental humbug there. Not but that the Court has a trouble to keep 'em in their places sometimes; & I wished it had been one in the Lords instead. However, Sheridan says he has been learning his speech these two days, & has hunted

his father's dictionary through for some stunning long words.
— Now, Maria (to Mrs Fitzherbert) I am going home.

Lady Salisbury.

At last, then, England will take her place in the forefront of this mortal struggle, & in pure disinterestedness fight with all her strength for the European deliverance. God defend the right!

The guests begin to depart.

Semichorus I of the Years. (aerial music)

Leave this glib throng to its conjecturing,
And let some burdened weeks uncover what they bring!

Semichorus II.

The said Debate, to wit; its close in deeds;
Till England stands enlisted for the ~~Patriots'~~ Enthusiasts' needs.

Semichorus I.

And transports in the docks gulph down their freight —
Of buckled fighting-flesh, & ~~[illegible]~~ gate-bound, watch & wait.

Semichorus II

Till gracious ~~[illegible]~~ zephyrs shoulder on their sails
To where the brine of Biscay moans its tragic tales.

Chorus.

Bear we, too, south, as we were swallow-vanned,
And mark the game now played there by the Master-hand!

The reception-chamber is shut over by the night without, & the point of view rapidly recedes south, London, & its streets, & lights, diminishing till they are lost in the distance; & its noises being succeeded by the babble of the Channel waves.

Scene IV.

Madrid and its environs.

The view is from the housetops of the city on a dusty evening in July, following a day of suffocating heat. The sunburnt roofs, warm ochreous walls, & blue shadows of the capital, wear their usual aspect except for a few feeble attempts at decoration.

Dumb Show.

Gazers gather in the central streets, & particularly in the Puerta del Sol. They show curiosity, but no enthusiasm. Patrols of French soldiery move up & down in front of the people, & seem to awe them into quietude.

There is a discharge of artillery in the outskirts, & the church bells begin ringing; but the peals dwindle away to a melancholy jangle, & then to silence. Simultaneously, on the northern horizon of the arid, unenclosed, & treeless plains swept by the eye around the city, a cloud of dust arises, & a Royal Procession is seen nearing. It means the new king, Joseph Bonaparte.

He comes on, escorted by a clanking guard of four thousand Italian troops, & the brilliant royal carriage is followed by a hundred coaches bearing his suite. As the procession enters the city many houses reveal themselves to be closed, many citizens leave the route & walk elsewhere, while many of those who remain turn their backs upon the spectacle.

King Joseph proceeds thus through the Pláza Oriente to the granite-walled Royal Palace, where he alights & is received by some of the nobility, the French generals who are in occupation there, & some clergy. Heralds emerge from the Palace, & hasten to divers points in the city, where trumpets are blown & the Proclamation of Joseph as King of Spain is read in a loud voice. It is received in silence.

The sun sets, & the curtain falls.

Scene V.

The open sea between the English coasts & the Spanish Peninsula.

From high aloft, in July weather, & turned east, the vision swoops over the ocean & its coastlines, from Cork Harbour on the extreme left, to Mondego Bay, Portugal, on the extreme right. Land's End & the Scilly Isles, Ushant & Cape Finisterre, ~~form~~ are projecting features along the middle distance of the picture, & the English Channel recedes endwise as a tapering avenue near the centre.

Dumb Show.

Four groups of moth-like transport ships ~~like moths~~ are discovered advancing across this wide liquid plain. The first group is just vanishing behind Cape Mondego to enter Mondego Bay; the second has come out from Plymouth Sound, & is preparing to stand down Channel; the third is clearing St. Helen's point for the same course; & the fourth, ~~is~~ much further up Channel, is obviously to follow on considerably in the rear of the two preceding. A south-east wind is blowing strong, &, according to the part of their course reached, they either sail straight on with the wind on their larboard quarter, or labour forward by tacking in zigzags.

Spirit of the Pities

What are these fleets that cross ~~take~~ the sea
From British ports & bays
To coasts that glister southwardly
Behind the Dog-Day haze?

Recording Angels (chanting)

I.

They are the shipped battalions sent
To bar the Great Belligerent
Who stalks the Dancers' Land.
Within those hulls, like sheep a-pen,
Are packed in thousands fighting-men
And colonels in command.

II.

The fleet that leans on linen fin
Far south, where Mondego mouths in,
Bears Wellesley & his aides therein,
And Hill, & Crauford too;
With Torrens, Ferguson, & Fane,
And majors, captains, clerks, in train,
And those grim needs that appertain –
The surgeons – not a few.
To ~~these~~ them add near twelve thousand souls
In linesmen that the list enrolls,
Borne onward by those sheeted poles
As war's red retinue!

I.

The fleet that clears St. Helen's shore
Holds Burrard, Hope, ill-omened Moore,
Clinton & Paget; while
The transports that pertain to those
Count six-score sail, whose planks enclose
Ten thousand rank & file.

II.

The third fleet, out of Plymouth Sound,
With Acland, Anstruther, impound
Souls to six thousand strong.
While those, the fourth fleet, that we see

Far back, are lines with cavalry,
And guns of girth, wheeled heavily
To roll the roads along.

Spirit of the Years.

Enough, & more, of inventories & names!
Many will fail; many earn doubtful fames.
Await the fruitage of their acts & aims.

Dumb show continues.

In the spacious scene visible the far-separated groups of transports, convoyed by battleships, float on before the wind almost imperceptibly, as preened duck-feathers across a pond. The southernmost expedition, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, soon comes to anchor within the Bay of Mondego aforesaid, & the soldiery are discernible, by the fancy, landing upon the beach from boats. Simultaneously the division commanded by Moore, as yet in the Chops of the Channel is seen to be beaten back by contrary winds. It gallantly puts to sea again, & being joined by the division under Anstruther that set out from Plymouth, labours round Ushant, & stands to the south in the track of Wellesley. The rearward transports do the same.

A moving stratum of summer cloud covers up the spectacle like an awning.

Scene VI.

St. Cloud. The Boudoir of Joséphine.

It is the dusk of an evening in latter summer, & from the windows, which are still uncurtained, can be seen the Empress with Napoléon & some ladies & officers of the Court playing Catch-me-if-you-can by torchlight on the lawn. The moving torches throw bizarre lights & shadows into the apartment, where only a remote candle or two are burning.

Enter Joséphine & Napoléon together, somewhat out-of breath. With careless suppleness she slides down on a couch & fans herself. Now that the candle-rays reach her they show her mellow complexion, her velvety eyes with long lashes, mouth with pointed corners & excessive mobility, & curls of dark hair pressed down upon the temples by a gold band.

The Emperor drops into a seat near her, & they remain in silence till he jumps up, knocks over some nicknacks with his elbow, & begins walking about the boudoir.

Napoléon (with sudden gloom)

These mindless games are very well, my friend:
But ours to-night marks, not improbably,
The last we play together.

Joséphine

Can you say it!

Why raise that ghastly nightmare on me now,
When, for a moment, my poor heart had dreams
Denied it all the earlier anxious day.

Napoléon

Things that verge nigh, my simple Joséphine,
Are not shoved off by wilful winking-at.
Better quiz evils with too strained an eye
Than have them leap from disregarded lairs.

Joséphine.

Maybe 'tis true, & you shall have it so! —
Yet much is wise in foolishly forgetting.

Napoléon.

Ha, ha! That's like you. Well, each day by day
I get sour news. Each hour since we returned
From this queer Spanish business at Bayonne,
I have had nothing else; & hence my brooding.

Joséphine.

But all went well throughout our touring-time?

Napoléon.

Not so — behind the scenes. Our arms at Baylen
Have been smirched badly. Twenty thousand shamed
All through Dupont's ill luck. The selfsame day

My brother Joseph's progress to Madrid
Was glorious as a sodden rocket's fizz!
Since when his letters creak with querulousness.
"Napoléon el chico" – that they call him –
"Napoléon the Little", so he says.
Then notice Austria. Much looks louring there,
And her sly new regard for England grows.
The English, next, have shipped an army down
To Mondego, under one Wellesley,
A man from India, & his march is south
To Lisbon, by Vimiero. On he'll go
And do the devil's mischief ere he is met
By unaware Junot, & cheveyed back
To English fogs & fumes.

Joséphine

My dearest one,
You have mused on worse reports with better grace
94/H Full many & many a time. Ah – there is more!.....
I know; I know!

Napoléon (kicking away a stool)

There is, of course, that worm
Time ever keeps in hand for gnawing me –
The question of my dynasty – which bites
Closer & closer as the years roll on.

Joséphine

Of course it's that! For nothing else comes hang
My lord on tenterhooks through nights & days; —
Or rather, not the question, but the tongues
That keep the question stirring. — Nought ~~dreamed~~ recked you
Of throne-succession or dynastic lines
When gloriously engaged in Italy!
I was your fairy then: they labelled me
Your Lady of Victories; & much I joyed.
Till dangerous ones drew near & daily sowed
These choking tares within your fecund brain. —
Making me tremble if a panel crack,
Or mouse but cheep, or silent leaf sail down,
And murdering my melodious hours with dreads
That ~~all~~ my late happiness, & ~~all~~ my late hope,
Will over-soon be knelled!

Napoléon (genially nearing her)

But years have passed since first we talked of it;
And now, with loss of dear Hortense's son,
Who won me as my own, it looms forth more.
And selfish 'tis in my good Joséphine
To blind her vision to the weal of France,
And this great Empire's solidarity. —
The grandeur of your sacrifice would golden
Your life's whole shape.

Joséphine.

Were I as coarse a wife
As I am limned in English caricature—
(Those cruel effigies they draw of me!)—
You could not speak more aridly.

Napoléon

Nay, nay!
You know, my ~~friend~~ dear, how much I love you still.
Were there a long-notorious dislike
Betwixt us, reason might be in your dreads.
But all earth knows our conjugality.
There's not a bourgeois couple in the land
Who, should dire duty rule their severance,
Could part with scanter scandal than could we.

Joséphine (pouting)

Nevertheless there's one.

Napoléon.

A scandal? What?

Joséphine

Madame Walewska. How could you pretend
When, after Jena, I'd have come to you,
"The weather was so wild, the roads so rough,
That no one of my sex & delicate nerve
Could hope to face the dangers & fatigues."

Yes – so you wrote me, dear. They killed not her!

1 Barber

McClary

Napoleon (blandly)

She was a week's adventure – not worth words!
I say 'tis France. – I have held out for years
Against the constant pressure brought on me
To null this sterile marriage!

Joséphine (bursting into sobs)

Me you blame!
But how know you that you are not the culprit?

Napoléon

I have reason so to know – if I must say.
The Polish lady you have chosen to name
Has proved the fault not mine.

(Josephine sobs more violently)

Don't cry, my cherished;
It is not really amiable of you,
Or prudent, my good little Joséphine,
With so much in the balance.

Josephine

How – know you –
What may not happen! Wait a – little longer!

Napoléon (playfully pinching her arm)

O come, now, my adored! Haven't I already!

Nature's a dial whose shade no hand puts back,
Trick as it may! My friend, you are forty-three
This very year in the world —

(Josephine breaks out sobbing again)

And vain it is
To think of waiting longer; pitiful
To dream of coaxing shy fecundity
To an unlikely freak by physicking
With superstitious drugs & quackeries
That work you harm, not good. — The fact being so,
I have looked it squarely down — against my heart!
Solicitations voiced repeatedly
At length have shown the soundness of their shape,
And left me no denial. You, at times,
My dear one, have been used to handle it.
My brother Joseph, years back, frankly gave
His honest view that something should be done;
And he, you well may know, shows no ill tinct
In his regard of you.

Joséphine

And what princess?

Napoléon.

For wiving with? No thought was given to that,
She shapes as vaguely as the Veiled —

Joséphine.

It's Alexander's sister, I ~~acquaint~~ no, no; in full sire!—
But why this craze for lineal~~ty~~ manikins
made Of mere ~~frail~~ graveyard flesh? You have said yourself
It mattered not. Great Caesar, you declared,
Sank sonless to his rest; was greater deemed
Even for the isolation. Frederick
Saw, too, no heir. It is the fate of such,
Often, to be denied the common hope
As fine for fulness in the rarer gifts
That Nature ~~lends~~ yields them. O my husband ~~dear~~ long,
Will you not purge your soul to value best
That high heredity from brain to brain
Which supersedes mere sequences of blood,
That often vary more from sire to son
Than between furthest strangers!.....
Napoléon's offspring in his like must lie;
The second of his line be he who ~~stops~~ shows
Napoléon's soul in later bodiment,
The household father happing as he may!

Napoléon (smilingly wiping her eyes)

Little guessed I my dear would prove her rammed
With such a charge of apt philosophy
When tutoring me the arts in earlier times.—
She who at home coquetted through the years

In which I vainly penned her wishful words
To come & comfort me in Italy,
Might, faith, have urged it then effectually!
But never would you stir from Paris friends (*with some bitterness*).
And so, when arguments like this could move me,
I heard them not; & get them only now
When their weight dully falls. — But I have said
'Tis not for me, but France. — Good-bye an hour (*kissing her*)
I must dictate some letters. This new move
Of England on Madrid may mean some trouble.
Come, dwell not gloomily on this sad need
Of waiving private joy for policy.
We are but thistle-globes on Heaven's high gales,
And whither blown, or when, or how, or why,
Can choose us not at all. . . . .
I'll come to you anon, dear: staunch Roustan
Will light me down.

(*Exit Napoleon.*

The scene shuts in shadow.

Scene VII.

Vimiero.

A village among the hills of Portugal, about fifty miles north of Lisbon. Around it are disclosed, as ten on Sunday morning strikes,

a blue army of fourteen thousand men in isolated columns, & a red ~~portion of that recently landed,~~ army of eighteen thousand in line formation, drawn up in order of battle. The blue army is a French one under Junot; the other an English one under Wellesley — portion of that recently landed.

The August sun glares on the shaven faces, white gaiters, & white cross-belts of the English, who are to fight for their lives, while sweating under ~~with~~ a quarter-hundredweight, in knapsack & pouches strapped on to each of them, & with firelocks heavy as putlogs. They occupy a group of heights, but their position is one of great danger, the land suddenly terminating two miles behind their backs in lofty cliffs overhanging the Atlantic. The French occupy the valleys in the English front; & this distinction between the two forces strikes the eye, — the red army is accompanied by scarce any cavalry, while the blue is strong in that arm.

Dumb Show.

The battle is begun with alternate moves that match each other like those of a chess opening. Junot makes an oblique attack by moving a division to his right; Wellesley moves several brigades to his left to balance it.

A column of six thousand French then climbs the hill against the English centre, & drives in those who are planted there. The ~~landsplash~~ English artillery checks its adversaries, & the infantry recover & charge the baffled French down the slopes. Meanwhile the latter's cavalry & artillery are attacking the village itself, &, rushing on a few squadrons of English dragoons stationed there, cut them to pieces. A dust is raised by this ado, & moans of men & shrieks of horses are heard. Close by the carnage the little

Maceira stream continues to trickle unconcernedly to the sea.

On the English left five thousand French infantry, having ascended to the ridge & maintained a striping musket-fire as sharply returned, are driven down by the bayonets of six English regiments. Thereafter a brigade of the French, the northernmost, finding that the others have pursued to the bottom, & are resting after the effort, surprize them & bayonet them back to their original summit. The seesaw is continued by the recovery of the English, who again drive their assailants down.

The French army pauses stultified, till, the columns uniting, they fall back towards the opposite hills. The English, seeing that their chance has come, are about to pursue & ~~dispose of them~~ settle the fortunes of the day. But a messenger dispatched from a distant group is ~~seen~~ marked riding up to a large nosed man with a telescope & an Indian sword who, his staff around him, has been directing the English movements. He seems astonished at the message, appears to resent it, & pauses ~~motionless~~ with a gloomy look. But he sends countermands to his generals; & the pursuit ends abortively.

The French retreat without further molestation by a circuitous march into the great road ~~t~~ to Torrès Védras by which they came, leaving nearly two thousand dead & wounded on the slopes they have quitted.

Dumb show ends & the curtain draws.

Mr Clowy ~~J H Slater~~ II

Act Third.

Scene I.

Spain. A road near Astorga.

The eye of the spectator rakes the road from the interior of a cellar which opens upon it, & forms the basement of a deserted house, the roof, doors, & shutters of which have been pulled down & burnt for bivouac fires. The season is the beginning of January, & the country is covered with a sticky snow. The road itself is ~~an~~ intermittently encumbered with heavy traffic, the surface being churned to a yellow mud that lies nearly ~~knee~~ ankle-deep, & at the numerous holes in the track forming still deeper quagmires.

In the gloom of the cellar are heaps of damp straw, in which ragged figures are lying half-buried, many of the men in the uniform of English line-regiments, & the women & children in clouts of all descriptions, some being nearly naked. At the back of the cellar is revealed, through a burst door, an inner vault, where are discernible some wooden-hooped wine-casks; in one sticks a gimlet; & the broaching-cork of another has been driven in. The wine runs into pitchers, washing-basins, shards, chamber-vessels, & other extemporized ~~articles~~ receptacles. Most of the inmates are intoxicated; some to insensibility.

So far as the characters are doing anything they are contemplating the almost incessant traffic outside, passing ~~all~~ in one direction. It includes a medley of stragglers from the Marquis of Romana's Spanish forces & the retreating English army under Sir John Moore – of which the concealed deserters form portion.

First Deserter ~~[illegible]~~

Now he's one of the eighty first, & I'd gladly let that poor blade know that we've all that man can wish for here – good wine & buxom ~~good~~ women. But if I do, we shan't have room for ourselves – hey?

He signifies a man limping past with neither firelock nor knapsack. Where the discarded knapsack has rubbed for weeks against his shoulder-blades the jacket & shirt are fretted away, leaving his skin exposed

Second Deserter (drowsily)

He may be the eighty firsht, or th' eighty second; but what I say is, without fear of contradiction, I wish to the Lord I was back in old Bristol again. I'd sooner have a nipperkin of our own real "Bristol milk" than a ~~[illegible]~~ mash-tub full of this barbarian wine!

Third deserter.

'Tis like thee to be ungrateful, after putting away such a skinfull on't. I am as much Bristol as thee, but would as soon be here as there. There ain't near such willing women, that are ~~[illegible]~~ strict respectable too, there as hereabout, & no open cellars. – As there's many a slip

in this country I'll have the rest of my allowance now. (He crawls on his elbows to one of the barrels, & turning on his back lets the wine run down his throat.)

Fourth deserter (to a fifth who is snoring)

Don't treat us to such a snoaching there, mate. Here's some more coming, & they'll sight us if we don't mind.

Enter a straggling flock of military objects, some with fragments of shoes on, others barefooted, many of the latter's feet bleeding. The arms & waists of some are clutched by women as tattered & barefooted as themselves. They pass on.

The Retreat continues. More of Romana's Spanish limp ~~past~~ along in disorder; then enters a miscellaneous group of English cavalry soldiers, some on foot, some mounted, the rearmost of the latter bestriding a shoeless foundered creature whose neck is vertebrae & mane only. ~~After~~ while passing it falls from exhaustion; the trooper extricates himself, & pistols the animal through the head. ~~& walks on to~~ ~~[illegible] dragoons [illegible] dismounted trooper & the others of the~~

He & the rest pass on.

First deserter (a new trampling being heard)

Here's something more in order, or I am much mistaken (He cranes out). Yes, a sergeant of the forty third, & what's left of their second battalion. And, by God, not far behind I see shining helmets. 'Tis a whole squadron of French dragoons!

Enter the sergeant. He has a racking cough, but endeavours to

hide how it is wasting him by stiffening himself up. He halts, & looks back, till the remains of the forty third are abreast, to the number of some three hundred, about half of whom are crippled invalids, the other half being presentable & armed soldiery.

Sergeant.

Now, show yer nerve, & be men. If you die to-day you won't have to die to-morrow. Fall in! (The miscellany falls in.) All invalids & men without arms march ahead as well as they can. Quick — maw-w-w-ch! (Exeunt invalids, &c) Now! 'Tention! Shoulder-r-r-r — fawlocks! (Order obeyed)

The sergeant hastily forms these into platoons, who prime & load, & seem preternaturally changed from what they were five minutes earlier into alert soldiers.

Enter French dragoons ~~some way back~~ at the back of the scene. The rear platoon of the forty third, turns, fires, & proceeds. The next platoon covering them does the same. This is repeated several times. Exeunt French dragoons, giving up the pursuit. The coughing sergeant & the remnant of the forty third march on.

Fourth deserter (to a woman lying beside him)

What d'ye think o' that, my honey? It fairly makes me a man again. Come, wake up! We must be getting along somehow. (He regards the woman more closely). Why — ~~[illegible]~~ my little chick? Look here, friends. (They look, & the woman is found to be dead) If I didn't think that her poor knees felt cold! ..... And only an hour ago I swore I'd marry her!

They remain silent, & the retreat continues in the snow without, now in the form of a file of ox-carts, followed by a mixed rabble of English & Spanish, & mules & muleteers hired by English officers to carry their baggage. The muleteers, looking about, & seeing that the French dragoons have been there, cut the bands which hold on the packs, & scamper off with their mules.

H. Slatte — A voice (behind)

The Commander-in-chief is determined to maintain discipline, & they must suffer by his orders. No more pillaging here. It is the worst case of brutality & plunder that we have had in this wretched time!

Enter an English captain of hussars, a lieutenant, the guard of about a dozen, & three men as prisoners.

Captain

If they choose to draw lots, only one need be made an example of. But they must be quick about it. The advance-guard of the enemy is not far behind.

The three prisoners appear to draw lots, & the one on whom the lot falls is blindfolded. Exeunt the hussars behind a wall, with carbines. A volley is heard & something falls. The wretches in the cellar shudder.

Fourth Deserter.

'Tis the same for us but for this heap of straw. Ah — my doxy is the only one of us who is safe & sound! (He kisses the dead woman.)

Retreat continues. A train of six-horse baggage-waggons lumbers

past, a mounted sergeant alongside. Among the baggage lie wounded soldiers & sick women.

Sergeant of the waggon-train.

If so be they are dead, ye may as well drop 'em over the tail-board. 'Tis no use straining the horses unnecessary.

Waggons halt. Two of the wounded who have just died are taken out, & laid down by the roadside & some muddy snow scraped over them. Exeunt waggons & sergeant.

An interval. More English troops pass on horses mostly shoeless & foundered. ¶Enter Sir John Moore & officers. Moore appears in the evening light as a handsome man far on in the forties, the orbits of his dark eyes showing marks of deep anxiety. He is talking to some of his staff with vehement emphasis & gesture. They ~~pass on~~ cross the scene & go on out of sight, & the squashing of their horses' hoofs in the snowy mud dies away.

Fifth deserter (incoherently in his sleep)

Poise fawlocks – open pans – right hands to pouch – handle ca'tridge – bring it – quick motion – bite top well off – prime – shut pans – cast about – load –

First deserter (throwing a shoe at the sleeper)

Shut up that! D'ye think you are a 'cruity in the awkward squad still?

Second deserter.

I don't know what he thinks, but I know what I feel! Would ~~to God~~ that I wer at home in England again, where there's ~~good drink~~ old fashioned tipple, & a proper God A'mighty

instead of this eternal 'Ooman & baby; — ay, at home, ~~[illegible]~~ a-leaning against old Bristol Bridge, ~~[illegible]~~ ~~all day~~ & no questions asked, & the winter sun slanting friendly over Baldwin Street as 'a used to do! 'Tis my very belief, though I have lost all ~~true~~ sure reckoning, that if I wer there, & in good 'ealth, 'twould be New-Year's day about now. What it is over here I don't know. Ay, to-night we should be a-setting in the tap of the "Adam & Eve" — lifting up the tune of "The Light o' the Moon"! ~~[illegible]~~ 'Twer a romantical thing enough. 'A used to go som'at like this (He sings in a nasal tone):

"O I thought it had been day,
173/1 And I stole from her away;
But it proved to be the light o' the moon!"

Retreat continues, with infantry in good order. Hearing the singing, one of the officers looks around, & detaching a patrol enters the ruined ~~mansion~~ house with the file of men, the body of soldiers marching on. The inmates of the cellar bury themselves in the straw. The officer peers about, & seeing no one prods the straw with his sword.

Voices (under the straw)

Oh! Hell! Stop it! We'll come out! Mercy! Quarter!

The lurkers are uncovered.

Officer.

If y'are well enough to sing bawdy songs, you are well enough to march. So out of it — or you'll be ~~hanged~~ shot here & now!

Several.

You may shoot us, captain, or the French may shoot us, or the devil may take us; we don't care which. Only we can't stir. Pity the women captain, but do what you will with us.

The searchers pass over the wounded, & stir out those capable of marching, both men & women, so far as they discover them. They are pricked on by the patrol. Exeunt patrol & deserters in its charge.

Those who remain look stolidly at the highway. The English rear guard of cavalry crosses the scene & passes ~~by~~ out. An interval. It grows dusk.

Spirit ~~Sinister~~ Ironic.

Quaint poesy, & real romance of war!

Spirit of the Pities.

Mock on, Shade, if thou wilt! But others find
Poesy ever ~~[illegible]~~ lurk where ~~palpitates~~ pit-pats poor mankind!

The Scene ~~[illegible]~~ is cloaked in Darkness.

Scene II

The Same.

It is nearly midnight. The fugitives who remain in the cellar, having slept off the effects of the wine, are awakened by a new tramping of cavalry which becomes more & more persistent. It is the French, who now fill the road. The advance-guard having passed by, Delaborde's division, Lorge's division, Merlé's division, & others, successively cross the gloom.

Presently come the outlines of the Imperial Guard, & then, with a start, those in hiding realize their situation, & are wide awake. Napoléon enters with his staff. He has just been overtaken by a courier, & orders those round him to halt.

Napoléon.

Let there a fire be lit: ay, here & now!
The lines within these letters brook no pause
In mastering their purport.

Some of the French approach the ruined house &, appropriating what wood is still left there, heap it by the roadside & set it alight. A mixed rain & snow falls, & the sputtering flames throw a glare all around.

~~First~~ Second Deserter (under his voice)

We be shot corpses! Ay, faith, we be! Why didn't I stick to England, & true doxology, & leave ~~those~~ foreign doxies & their wine alone! .....

mate, can ye squeeze another shardful from the cask there, for I feel my time is come!..... O that I had but the barrel of that firelock I throwed away, & that wasted powder to prime & load! This bullet I ~~gnaws~~ chaws to squench my hunger would do the rest!...... Yes, I could pick him off now!

Marcon
A Juzes

~~Second~~ First Deserter.

You lie low with you picking off, or he may pick off you! Thank God the babies are gone. May be we shan't be noticed, if we've but the courage to do nothing, & keep hid.

Napoleon dismounts, approaches the fire, & looks around.

Napoleon.

Some more of their dead horses here, I see.

Officer.

Yes, sire. We have counted eighteen hundred odd
From Benavente hither, pistolled thus.
Some we'd to finish for them: headlong haste
Spared them no time ~~to do it~~ for mercy to their brutes.
One half their cavalry now tramps afoot.

Napoléon

And what's the tale of waggons we've picked up?

Officer.

Spanish & all abandoned, some four hundred;
Of magazines & firelocks, ~~ten good~~ full ten load;

And stragglers & their women ~~a good~~ not a few.

Napoléon.

Ay, devil — plenty those! Licentious ones
These English, as all canting peoples are. —
And prisoners?

Officer.

Seven hundred English, sire;
Spaniards five thousand more.

Napoléon.

'Tis not amiss.
To keep up the new year they run away!

[He soliloquizes as he begins tearing open the dispatches]

Nor Pitt nor Fox displayed such blundering
As these in this campaign! It is, indeed,
Enlarging Folly to Foolhardiness
To combat France by land! But how expect
Aught that can claim the name of Government
From Canning, Castlereagh, & Perceval,
Caballers all — poor sorry politicians —
To whom has fallen the luck unmerited
Of ~~profiting by~~ reaping in from Pitt's bold husbandry
A mighty credit for statecraftsmanship!

He unfolds a dispatch, & looks for something to sit on. A cloak is thrown over a log, & he settles to reading by the firelight. The others stand round. The light, crossed by the snow-flakes, flickers on his

unhealthy face & stoutening figure. He sinks into the rigidity of profound thought, till his features lour.

So this is their reply! They have done with me!
Britain declines negociating further —
Flouts France & Russia indiscriminately.
"Since one dethrones & keeps as prisoners
The most legitimate kings" — that means myself —
"The other suffers their unworthy treatment
For sordid interests" — that's for Alexander! ....
And what is George made to say besides? —
"Pacific overtures to us are wiles
Woven to unnerve the generous nations round
Lately escaped the galling yoke of France,
Or waiting so to do. Such, then, being seen,
These tentatives must be regarded now
As finally forgone; & crimson war
Be faced to its fell worst, unflinchingly".
— The devil take their lecture! What am I,
That England should return such insolence?

He jumps up, furious, & walks to & fro (beside) the fire. By & by cooling he sits down again.

Now as to hostile signs in Austria .....
(He breaks another seal & reads)
Ah, — this means blows with her some day in spring!

Thinking me cornered over here in Spain
She speaks without disguise, the covert pact
'Twixt her & England owning now quite frankly,
Careless how works its knowledge upon me.
She, England, Germany: Well – I can front them!
That there is no sufficient force of French
Between the Elbe & Rhine to prostrate her
Let new & terrible experience
Soon disillude her of! ~~Then~~ So let her arm:
The opportunity she late let slip
Will not subserve her now!

Spirit of the Pities

Has he forewarnings that this Austrian court,
Whereon his mood takes mould so masterful,
Is rearing naively in its nursery-house
A future wife for him?

Spirit of the Years.

Thou dost but guess it,
And how should he do more?

Napoléon (opening & reading another dispatch)

Now eastward. Ah!
The Orient likewise, looms ~~ing~~ full sombrely.....
The Turk declines pacifically to yield
What I have promised Alexander. Oh!....

As for Constantinople being his prize
I'll see him frozen first. His flight's too high!
And showing that I think so makes him cool. (Rises)
Is the Duke of Dalmatia ~~[illegible]~~ yet at hand?

Officer

He has arrived along the Leon road
Just now, your Majesty; & ~~[illegible]~~ only waits
The close of your perusals.

Enter Soult, who is greeted by Napoléon.

First Deserter

Good Lord deliver us from all great men! That's Marshal Soult the Duke of Dalmatia.

Second Deserter.

The Duke of Damnation for our poor rear, by the look o't!

First deserter.

yes –
He'll make 'em rub their poor rears before he has done with 'em!
But we ~~will~~ must overtake 'em to-morrow by a cross cut, please God!

Napoléon (pointing to the despatches)

Here's matter enough for me, Duke, & to spare.
The ominous contents are like the threats
The minor prophets deal Jerusalem!
Austria we soon shall have upon our hands,
And England still is fierce for fighting on. –
Strange humour in a ~~[illegible]~~ concord-loving ~~[illegible]~~ land!

So now I must to Paris straight away—
At least, to Valladolid; so as to stand
More apt for couriers than I do out here
In this far western corner, & to ~~read~~ mark
The veerings of these new developments,
And pull some counter-strings.....
Then, too, there's Lannes, still sweating at the siege
Of sullen Zaragoza as 'twere hell.
Him I must further counsel how to close
His twice too tedious battery.—You, then, Soult—
Ney is not yet, I gather, quite come up?

Soult.

He's near, sire, on the Benavente road;
But some hours to the rear I reckon, ~~him~~ still.

Napoléon.

Him I'll direct to come to your support
In this pursuit & harassment of Moore
Wherein you take my place. You'll follow up
And chase the flying English to the sea.
Bear hard on them, the bayonet at their loins,
With Merle's & Mermet's corps just gone ahead,
And Delaborde's, & ~~Heudelet's~~ Heudelet's here at hand.
While Lorge's & Lahoussaye's picked dragoons
Will follow, & Franceschi's cavalry.
To Ney I am writing that, in case of need,

He will support, with Marchand & Mathieu.—
Your total thus of seventy thousand odd,
Ten thousand horse, & cannon to five score,
Should near annihilate this British force,
And carve a triumph large in history.

(He bends over the fire & makes some notes rapidly.)

I move into Astorga; then turn back,
(Though only in my person do I turn)
And leave to you the destinies of Spain.

Spirit of the Years.

More turning may be here than he designs!
Tr. ~~[illegible]~~ suggests one turning ~~of~~ from his ~~glory's tide~~ apogee!
In this ~~precipitate~~ small, sudden, swift turn backwards he

The characters disperse, the fire sinks, & snow-flakes & darkness blot out all.

A. Sunes
in Leon

Scene III.

Before Coruña

The town, harbour, & hills at the back, are viewed from an aerial point to the north, over the lighthouse known as the Tower of Hercules, ~~standing~~ rising at the extremity of the tongue of land on which La Coruña stands, the open ocean being in the spectator's rear.

In the foreground the most prominent feature is the walled Old Town, with its white towers & houses, shaping itself aloft over the Harbour. The new town with its painted fronts shows bright below, even on this cloudy winter afternoon. Further off, behind the Harbour — now crowded with British transports of all sizes — is a series of low broken hills, intersected by hedges & stone walls.

A mile behind these low inner hills is beheld a rocky chain of outer & loftier heights that completely command the former. Nothing behind them is seen but grey sky.

Dumb Show.

On the inner hills aforesaid the little English army — a pathetic fourteen thousand of foot only — is seen deploying into line: Hope's division on the left, Baird's to the right. Paget with the reserve is in the hollow to the left behind them; & Fraser's division still further back shapes out on a slight rise to the right.

This harassed force now appears as if composed of any but the men observed in the retreat insubordinately straggling along like vagabonds. Yet they are the same men, suddenly stiffened & grown amenable to discipline by the satisfaction of standing to the enemy at last. They resemble a double palisade of red stakes, the only gaps being those that the melancholy necessity of scant numbers entails here & there.

Over the heads of these red men is beheld on the outer hills the twenty thousand French that have been pushed along the roads at the heels of the English by Soult. They have an ominous super-

iority, both in position & in their abundance of cavalry & artillery, over the slender lines of English foot. The left of this background, facing Hope, is made up of Delaborde's & Merle's divisions, while in a deadly arc round Baird, from whom they are divided only by the village of Elvina, are placed Mermet's division, Lahoussaye's & Lorge's dragoons, Franceschi's cavalry, &, highest up of all, a formidable battery of eleven great guns that rake the whole British line.

It is now getting on for two o'clock, & a stir of activity has lately been noticed along the French front. Three columns are discerned descending from their position, the first towards the division of Sir David Baird, the weakest point in the English line, the next towards the centre, the third towards the left. A heavy cannonade from the battery supports this advance.

The clash ensues, the English being swept down in swathes by the enemy's artillery. The opponents meet face to face at the village in the valley between them, & the fight there grows furious.

Sir John Moore is seen galloping to the front under the gloomy sky.

Spirit of the Pities

I seem to vision in San Carlos' garden,
That rises salient in the upper town,
His name, & date, & doing, set within
A filmy outline like a monument,
Which yet is but the insubstantial air.

Spirit of the Years

Read visions as conjectures; not as more.

When Moore arrives at the front, Fraser & Paget move to the right, where the English are most sorely pressed. A grape-shot strikes off Baird's arm. There is a little confusion, & he is borne to the rear; while Major Napier disappears, a prisoner.

Intelligence of these misfortunes is brought to Sir John Moore. He goes further forward, & precedes in person the forty second regiment & a battalion of the Guards who, with fixed bayonets, bear the enemy back, Moore's gestures in cheering them being notably energetic. Pursuers, pursued, & Sir John himself, pass out of sight behind the hill. Dumb show ends.

The point of vision descends to the immediate rear of the English position. The early January evening has begun to spread its shades, & shoutings are heard from behind the hill over which Moore & the advancing lines have vanished.

Straggling soldiers cross in the gloom.

First Straggler.

He's strook by a cannon-ball, that I know; but he's not killed, that I pray God A'mighty.

Second Straggler.

Better he were. His shoulder is knocked to a bag of splinters. As Sir David was ~~gone~~ wounded, Sir John was anxious that the right should

not give way, & went forward to keep it firm.

First Straggler.

He didn't keep *you* firm, howsomever.

Second Straggler.

Nor you, for that matter.

First Straggler

Well, 'twas a serious place for a man with no priming-horn, & a reputation to lose, so I judged it best to fall to the rear by lying down. A man can't fight by the regulations without his priming-horn, & I am none of your slovenly anyhow fighters.

Second Straggler.

'Nation, having dropped my flint-~~box~~ pouch, I wer the same. If you'd had your priming-horn, & I my flints, mind ye, we should have been there now? Then, forty-whory! that we are not is the fault o' Government for not supplying new ones from the reserve.

First Straggler.

What did he say as he led us on?

Second Straggler.

"Forty second, remember Egypt!" I heard it with my own ears. Yes, that was his strict verbatum.

First Straggler.

"Remember Egypt!" Ay, & I do, for I wer there! ..... Upon my sal-

vation, here's for back again, whether or no!

Mr Lecan
A. Morency

Second Straggler.

But here. "Forty second, remember Egypt," he said in the very eye of that French battery playing round us. And the next omen was, that he was strook off his horse & fell on his back to the ground. Remembering Egypt seemed a vain shadow to me then, as a practical man; & I remembered the way to the rear instead. – Captain Hardinge, who was close to him, jumped off his horse, & he & one in the ranks lifted him, & are now bringing him along.

First straggler.

Nevertheless, here's for back again, come what will. Remember Egypt! Hurrah! [Exit First Straggler.

Second straggler ponders, then suddenly follows first. Enter Colonel Anderson & others hastily.

An officer.

Now fetch a blanket. He must be carried in.
[Shouts heard

Colonel Anderson.

That means we are gaining ground! Had fate but left
This last blow undecreed, the day had shone
A star amid these girdling days of gloom!

Enter in the obscurity six soldiers of the forty second bearing Sir John Moore on their joined hands. Captain Hardinge walks beside

& steadies him. He is temporarily laid down in the shelter of a wall, his left arm dangling by a shred of flesh.

Enter Colonels Graham & Balgowan, & Captain Woodford.

Balgowan.

The wound is more than serious, Woodford, far.
Ride for a surgeon — one of those, perhaps,
Who tend Sir David Baird? (Exit Captain Woodford)
His blood throbs forth so fast, that much I fear
He'll drain to death ere anything can be done!

Hardinge.

I'll try to staunch it — since no skill is near.
(He takes off his sash & endeavours to bind the wound with it. Moore smiles & shakes his head)
There's not much checking it! — the rent's too large.
A dozen lives could pass that thoroughfare!

Enter a soldier with a blanket. They lift Moore into it. During the operation the pommel of his sword, which he still wears, is accidentally thrust into the wound.

I'll loose the sword — it bruises you, Sir John.
[He begins to unbuckle it.

12.9 / ℔

Moore.

No. Let it be! One hurt more matters not.
I wish it to go off the field with me.

Hardinge.

I like the sound of that. It augurs well
For your much hoped recovery!

Moore (looking sadly at his wound)
Hardinge, no:
That is impossible. My shoulder's gone,
And this left side laid open to my lungs.
There's but a brief time for me now, at most....
Could you – move me along – that I may ~~view~~ glimpse
~~[illegible]~~ still how the battle's going?

Hardinge.
Ay, Sir John –
A few yards higher up, where we can see.

He is borne in the blanket a little way onward, & lifted so that he can view the valley & the action.

Moore (brightly)
They seem to be advancing. Yes, it is so!

Enter Sir John Hope.

Ah, Hope! – I am doing badly here enough;
But they are doing rarely well out there (Presses Hope's hand)
Don't leave! My speech may flag with this fierce pain,
But you can talk to me. – Are the French checked?

Hope
My dear friend, they are ~~pressed~~ borne back steadily.

Moore (his voice weakening)

I hope that England — will be satisfied —
I hope my native land — will do me justice!....
I shall be blamed for sending Craufurd off,
Along the Orense road. But had I not,
Bonaparte would have headed us that way....

Hope

O would that Soult had but accepted battle
By Lugo town! We should have crushed him there.

Moore.

Yes.... yes. — But it has never been my lot
To owe much to good luck; nor was it then.
Good fortune has been mine, but mostly so (bitterly)
By the exhaustion of all forms of ~~ill~~ bad!....
Well, ~~bitterness~~ this does not become a dying man;
And others have been treated worse than I
By Him who holds us in His hollowed hand!....
I grieve for Zaragoza if, as said,
The siege goes sorely with her, which it must.
I heard when at Dahagun that late day
That she was holding out heroically.
But I must leave such now. — You'll see my friends
As early as you can? Tell them the whole.
Say to my mother...... (His voice fails.)
Hope, Hope, I have so much to tell to you,

But cannot speak it! — If it be I die
Without a word with Stanhope, ask him, Hope,
To — name me to his sister. You may know
Of what there was between us?......
Is Colonel Graham well, & all my aides?
My will I have made — it is in Colborne's charge —
With other papers.

Hope

He's now coming up.

Enter Major Colborne, principal aide-de-camp.

Moore.

Are the French beaten, Colborne, or repulsed?
Alas, you see what they have done to me!

Colborne.

I do Sir John: I am more than sad thereat!
In brief time now the surgeon will be here.
The French retreat — pushed from Elvina far.

Moore.

That's good! Is Paget anywhere about?

Colborne.

He's at the front, Sir John.

Moore

Remembrance to him.

Enter two surgeons.

Ah, doctors, – you can scarcely mend up me. –
And yet I feel so strong that much I fear
My dying 'll take a long & tedious while;
But not too long, I hope!

Surgeons (after a hasty examination)
You must be borne
In to your lodgings instantly, Sir John.
Please strive to stand the motion – if you can;
They will keep step, & bear you easily.

Moore.
Anything ..... Surely fainter ebbs that fire?

Colborne.
Yes: we must be advancing everywhere.

They lift him by stretching their sashes under the blanket, & begin moving off. A light waggon enters.

Moore.
Who's in that waggon?

Hardinge.
Colonel Wynch, Sir John.
He's wounded, but he urges you to take it.

Moore.
No. I will not. This suits .... Don't come with me;

There's more for you to do out here as yet. (Cheerful shouts)
A-ha! 'Tis this way I have wished to die!

Exeunt slowly in the twilight Moore, bearers, surgeons, &c, towards Coruña.

The scene overclouds.

F. A. Mouncey
Histoh

Scene IV

~~The Same~~ Coruña. The Jardin de San Carlos.

It is just before dawn on the following morning, objects being still indistinct. The features of the elevated enclosure of San Carlos can be recognized in dim outline, & also those of the old town of Coruña around, though scarcely a lamp is shining. The numerous transports in the harbour beneath have still their riding-lights burning.

In a nook of the garden, a lantern glimmers: some English soldiers of the ninth regiment are hastily digging a grave there, with extemporized tools. ~~they~~

A voice (from ~~the~~ the gloom of some distance off)
"I am the resurrection & the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

The soldiers look up. ~~The soldiers look up.~~ Enter at the further end of the garden a slow procession. It advances by the light of lanterns in the hands of some members of it. At moments the fitful rays fall upon bearers carrying a coffinless body rolled

in a blanket, with a military cloak roughly thrown over by way of pall. It is brought towards the incomplete grave, & followed by Hope, Graham, Anderson, Colborne, Hardinge & several aides-de-camp, a chaplain preceding.

First Soldier.

They are here, & nigh as quickly as ourselves.
There is no time to dig much deeper now:
Level a bottom just as far's we've got.
He'll moulder in this shallow hole as well
As in a royal vault!

Second Soldier.

Would it had been a foot deeper, here among foreigners, with strange manures manufactured out of no one knows what! Surely we can give him another six inches?

First soldier.

There is no time. ~~[illegible]~~ Just make the bottom true.

The meagre procession approaches the spot, & wait while the half-dug grave is roughly finished by the men of the ninth. They step out of it, & another soldier holds a lantern to the chaplain's book. The winter day slowly dawns.

Chaplain.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, & is full of misery. He cometh up, & is cut down, like a flower;

he fleeth as it were a shadow, & never continueth in one stay."

A gun is fired from the French battery not far off; then another. The ships in the harbour take in their riding-lights.

Colborne (in a low voice)

I knew that dawn would see them open fire.

Hope.

We must perforce make ~~best~~ swift use of our time.
Would we had done our too sad office sooner!

As the body is lowered another discharge echoes. They glance gloomily at the heights where the French are ranged, & then into the grave.

Chaplain.

"We therefore commit his body to the ground. ~~(another gun)~~. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." (Another gun) ¶ A spent ball falls not far off. They put out their lanterns. Continued firing, some shot ~~falling~~ splashing into the harbour below them.

Hope.

In mercy to the living, who are thrust
Upon our care for their deliverance,
And run much hazard till they are embarked,
We must abridge these duties to the dead,
Who will not mind be they abridged or no.

Hardinge.

And could he mind, would be the man to bid it....

Hope.

It may be well, then, ~~quickly~~ curtly to conclude,
And what's left unsaid, feel!

Chaplain (his words broken by the cannonade)

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, & the love of God, & the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore."

Officers & soldiers.

Amen!

The diggers of the ~~pit~~ hastily fill in the grave; & the mournful figures retire.

The curtain of cloud is drawn.

Scene V.

Vienna. A Café in the Stephans-Platz

An evening between light & dark is disclosed, some lamps being lit. The huge body & tower of St. Stephen's rise into the sky some way off, the western gleam still touching the upper stonework. Groups of ~~people~~ citizens are seated at the tables, drinking & reading the newspapers. One very animated group, which includes an Englishman, is talking loudly. ~~A newspaper reader glances up~~ A citizen near looks up from his newspaper.

Citizen (to the Englishman)

I read, sir, here, the troubles you discuss
Of your so gallant army under Moore.

His was a spirit baffled but not quelled,
And in his death there shone a stoicism
That lent retreat the rays of victory.

Englishman.

It was so. While men chide they will admire him,
And frowning, praise. I could nigh prophesy
That the unwonted crosses he has borne
In his career of sharp vicissitude
Will tinct his story with a ~~[illegible]~~ tender charm,
And grant the memory of his ~~strange~~ strenuous feats
As long a lease within the minds of men
As conquerors hold there. — Does the sheet give news
Of how the troops reached home?

~~First~~ Citizen (looking again at the paper)

Yes; from your press
It quotes that they arrived at Plymouth Sound
Mid dreadful weather & much suffering.
~~The Army Hospital received ...~~
It states ~~that~~ they looked the very ghosts of men,
So heavily had hunger told on them,
And the fatigues & toils of the retreat.
Several were landed dead, & many died

As they were borne along. At Portsmouth, too,
Sir David Baird, still helpless from his wound,
Was carried in a cot, ~~pale pale~~ sheet-pale & thin,
And Sir John Hope, lank as a skeleton. —
Thereto is added, with authority,
That a new expedition soon will fit,
And start again for Spain.

Englishman.

I have heard as much.

~~First~~ Citizen.

You'll do it next time, sir. And so shall we!

Second Citizen (regarding the church tower opposite)

You ~~were at~~ witnessed the High Service over there
They held this morning? (to the Englishman)

Englishman.

Ay; I did get in;

Though not without hard striving, such the throng;
But pilgrims range to waste with lidded eyes,
And I gazed like the rest.

~~Bishop~~ Mayor

Second ~~First~~ Citizen.

Our young Archduchess
Mary- ~~Maria~~ Louisa, was, they tell me, present?

Englishman.

O yes: the whole Imperial family.
And when the Archbishop called all blessings down
Upon the Landwehr colours, there displayed,
Enthusiasm touched the sky— ~~burst high~~ — in which she shared.

Second ~~First~~ Citizen.

Commendable in her, & spirited,
After the graceless ~~unspea…~~ insults to the Court
The Paris journals flaunt — not voluntarily,
As I account, but by his ordering.
He holds them in his fist, & at his squeeze
They bubble what he wills.... Yes, she's a girl
Of patriotic build, & hates the French.
Quite lately she was overheard to say
She had met with most convincing prophecies
That this year Bonaparte was doomed to die.

Englishman

Your arms must render its fulfilment sure.

Second
~~First~~ Citizen

Right! And we have the opportunity,
By upping to the war in suddenness,
And catching him ~~unawares~~ unware. The pink & flower
Of all his veteran troops are now in Spain
Fully engaged with yours; while those he holds
In Germany are scattered far & wide.

First Citizen (looking up again from his newspaper)
I see here that he vows & guarantees
Inviolate bounds to all our territories
If we but pledge to carry out forthwith
A prompt disarmament. Since that's his price
He'll burn his guarantees! Too long he has fooled us.
(To the Englishman) I drink, sir, to your land's consistency.
While we & all the kindred Europe states
Alternately have wooed & warred with him,
You have not bent to blowing hot & cold,
But held you sturdily inimical.

Englishman (laughing)
Less Christian-like forgiveness mellows us
Than Continental souls! (They drink)

A band is heard in a distant street, with shouting. Enter other citizens.

First citizen.
More news afloat?

Third & Fourth Citizens

Yea; an announcement that the Archduke Charles
Is given the chief command.

First, Second &c., Citizens.

Huzza! Right so!

A clinking of glasses, rising from seats, & general enthusiasm.

Second Citizen.

If war had not so promptly been declared,
Our cannon & our firelocks of themselves
Would have gone off to shame us! This forenoon
Some of the Landwehr met me; they are hot
For setting out, though but few months enrolled.

Englishman.

That moves reflection somewhat. They are young
To measure against the veteranized of France!

First Citizen.

Napoléon's army swarms with tender youth.
~~This~~ His last conscription besoms into it
Thousands of merest boys. But he contrives
To mix them in the field with seasoned frames.

Second Citizen.

The sadly-seen mistake this country made
Was that of grounding hostile arms at all.

We should have fought irreconcilably —
Have been consistent as the English are.
The French are our hereditary foes,
And this adventurer of the saucy sword,
This sacrilegious slighter of our shrines,
Stands author of all our ills.....
Our harvest-fields & fruits he tramples on,
Accumulating ruin in our land.
Think of what mournings in the last sad war
'Twas his to instigate & answer for.
~~I never shall~~ Time can efface the scene of tears
In palaces, in shops, in fields, in cots,
From women widowed, sonless, fatherless,
That then oppressed our eyes. There is no balm
For such deep harrowings but to fight again;
The enfranchisement of Europe hangs thereon,
And long she has ~~we~~ lingered for the sign to crush him.
That signal we have given; the time is come!

(Thumping on the tables.)

Fifth Citizen (at another table, looking up from his paper & speaking across)

I see that Russia has declined to aid us,
And says she knows that Prussia likewise must;
So that the mission of Prince Schwarzenberg
To Alexander's court, has closed in failure.

Third Citizen.

Ay – through his being honest – fatal sin! –
Probing too plainly for the Emperor's ears
His dangerous friendship with Napoléon.

Englishman.

Some say he was more than honest with the Tsar; –
Hinting that his becoming an ally
Makes him accomplice of the Corsican
In the unprincipled dark overthrow
Of his poor trusting childish Spanish friends –
Which gave the Tsar offence.

Third Citizen.

And our best bid –
The last, most delicate dish – a tastelessness.

First Citizen.

What was Prince Schwarzenberg's best bid, I pray?

Third Citizen.

The offer of the heir of Austria's hand
For Alexander's sister the Grand-duchess.

Englishman.

He could not have accepted, if or no:
She is inscribed as wife for Bonaparte.

[First Citizen.

143 I doubt that text!

Englishman

Time's context soon will show.

Second Citizen.

The Russian Cabinet can not for long
Resist the ardour of the Russian folk
To join with us the moment we achieve
Our first big victory.

A band is heard playing afar, & shouting. Citizens are seen hurrying past in the direction of the sounds. Enter sixth Citizen.

Sixth Citizen.

The Archduke Charles
Is passing the Ringstrasse just by now,
His regiment at his heels!

The younger citizens jump up with ardour, & go out, the elder mostly remaining.

Second Citizen.

Realm never felt
A more inexorable necessity
For horrid war than ours at this tense time!

The sounds of band-playing & huzzaing wane away. Citizens return.

First Citizen.

More news, my friends, of swift-uprising zeal?

Re-entered Citizens

Ere passing down the Ring, the Archduke paused

And gave the soldiers speech, enkindling them
As sunrise a confronting throng of pines!
Hot volunteers vamp in from vill & plain —
More than we need in furthest sacrifice.

First, Second, &c., Citizens.

Huzza! Right so! Good! Forwards! God be praised!

They stand up, & a ringing of glasses follows, till they subside to quietude & a reperusal of newspapers. Nightfall succeeds. Dancing rooms are lit up in an opposite street, & dancing begins. The figures are seen gracefully moving round to the throbbing strains of a string-band, which plays a new movement with a warlike name. The dancers sing patriotic words as they whirl.

The curtain closes over.

~~Mason~~ Baxter

Act Fourth.

Scene I.

A Road out of Vienna

It is a morning in early May. Rain descends in torrents, accompanied by peals of thunder. The tepid downpour has caused the trees to assume as by magic a clothing of fresh green leafage, & has ~~fill~~ turned the ruts of the uneven highway into pools of water.

A drenched travelling-chariot is passing, with a meagre escort. In the interior are seated four women; the Archduchess Maria Louisa, in age about eighteen; her stepmother the Empress of Austria, third wife of Francis, only four years older than the Archduchess; & two ladies of the Austrian court. Behind come attendant carriages bearing servants & luggage.

The inmates remain for the most part silent, & appear to be in a gloomy frame of mind. From time to time they glance at the moist spring scenes which pass without in a perspective distorted by the rain-drops that slide down the panes, & the blurring effect of the travellers' breathings. Of the four the one who keeps in the best spirits is the Archduchess, a fair, blue-eyed, full-figured, round-lipped maiden.

Maria Louisa.

Whether the rain comes in or not, I must open the window. Please allow me. (She straightway opens it)

Empress (groaning)

Yes — open it or shut it — I don't care. I am too ill to care for anything! (The carriage jolts into a hole). O woe! To think that I am driven away from my husband's home in such a miserable conveyance, along such a road, & in such weather as this! (Peal of thunder) There are his guns!

Maria Louisa

No, my dear one. It cannot be his guns. They told us when we started that he was only halfway from Ratisbon hither. So that he must be nearly a hundred miles off as yet; & a large army cannot move fast.

Empress.

He should never have been let come nearer than Ratisbon! The victory at Eckmühl ~~f~~ was fatal for us. O Eckmühl, Eckmühl! I believe he will overtake us before we get to Buda.

First Lady-in-Waiting.

If so, madam, shall we be chained as prisoners & marched to Paris?

Empress.

Undoubtedly. But I shouldn't much care. It would not be worse than this..... I feel sodden all through me, & sticky, & broken! (She closes her eyes as if to doze)

Maria Louisa.

It is dreadful to see her suffer so! (Shutting the window). If the roads were not so bad I should not mind. I almost wish we had stayed; though when he arrives the cannonade will be terrible.

First Lady-in-Waiting.

I wonder if he will get into Vienna. Will his men knock down all the houses, madam?

Maria Louisa.

If he do get in, I am sure his triumph will not be for long. My uncle the Archduke Charles is at his heels! I have been told many important prophecies about Bonaparte's end, which is fast nearing, it is asserted. It is he, they say, who is referred to in the Apocalypse. He is doomed to die this year, at Cologne, in an inn called "The Red Crab". I don't attach too much importance to all these predictions, but O how glad I should be to see them come true!

Second Lady-in-Waiting.

So should we all, madam. What would become of his divorce scheme then!

Maria Louisa

Perhaps there is nothing in that report. One can hardly believe such gossip.

Second Lady-in-Waiting.

But they say, your Imperial Highness, that he certainly has decided to sacrifice the Empress Joséphine, & that at the meeting last October

with the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt. it was even settled that he should marry as his second wife the Grand-duchess Anne.

Maria Louisa.

I am sure that the Empress her mother will never allow one of the house of Romanoff to marry with a bourgeois Corsican. I wouldn't if I were she!

First Lady-in-Waiting

Perhaps, madam, they are not so particular in Russia, where they are rather new themselves, as we in Austria, with your ancient dynasty, are in such matters.

Maria Louisa.

Perhaps not. Though the Empress-mother is a pompous old thing, as I have been told by Prince Schwarzenberg, who was negociating there last winter. My father says it would be a dreadful misfortune for our country if they were to marry. Though if we are to be exiled I don't see how anything of that sort can matter much ..... I hope my father is safe!

An officer of the escort rides up to the carriage window, which is opened.

Empress (unclosing her eyes)

Any more misfortunes?

Officer

A rumour is a-wind, your majesty,
That the French ~~forces~~ host, the Emperor in its midst,

Lannes, Masséna, & Bessières in its van,
Advancing hither along the Ratisbon road,
Has seized the castle & town of Ebersberg,
And burnt all down, with frightful massacre,
Vast heaps of dead & wounded being consumed,
So that the streets stink strong with frizzled flesh.
The enemy, ere this, ~~[illegible]~~, has crossed the Traun,
Hurling brave Hiller's army back on us,
And marches on Amstetten — thirty miles
Less distant from Vienna than before!

Empress.

The Lord have mercy on us! But O why
Did not the Archdukes intercept the foe?

Officer.

His Highness Archduke Charles, your Majesty,
After his sore repulse Bohemia-wards,
Could not proceed with strength & speed enough
To close in junction with the Archduke John
And Archduke Louis, as was their intent.
So Marshal Lannes comes first upon Vienna,
With Oudinot's & Demont's infantry;
Then Masséna & all his cavalry,
And then Napoléon, Guards, Cuirassiers,
And the main body of the Imperial force.

Empress.

Alas for poor Vienna!

Officer.

Even so!

Your Majesty has fled it none too soon.

The window is shut, & the procession disappears behind the sheets of rain.

Scene II.

The island of Lobau, with Wagram beyond.

The horizon at the back of the bird's-eye prospect is the high ground stretching from the Bisamberg on the left to the plateau of Wagram on the right. In front of these elevations spreads the wide plain of the Marchfeld, open, treeless, & with scarcely a house upon it.*

In the foreground the Danube crosses the scene, with a graceful slowness, looping itself round the numerous wooded islands therein. The largest of these, immediately under the eye, is the Lobau, which stands like a huge knot in the gnarled grain represented by the running river.

On this island can be discerned, closely packed, an enormous dark multitude of foot, horse, & artillery, in French uniforms, the numbers reaching to a hundred & seventy thousand.

[footnote: smallest type] * At this date.

Baxter
McLean

Lifting our eyes to discover what may be opposed to them we perceive on the Wagram plateau aforesaid, & right & left in front of it, extended lines of Austrians, whitish & glittering, to the number of a hundred & forty thousand.

The July afternoon turns to evening, the evening to twilight. A species of simmer which pervades the spectacle raises expectation till the very air itself seems strained with suspense. A huge event of some kind is awaiting birth.

Dumb Show.

The first change is that the tightly packed regiments on the island are got under arms. The soldiery are like a thicket of reeds in which every reed should be a man.

A large bridge connects the island with the further shore, as well as some smaller bridges. Opposite are high redoubts & ravelins that the Austrians have constructed for opposing the passage across, which the French ostentatiously set themselves to attempt by the large bridge, amid heavy cannonading.

But the movement is a feint, though this is not perceived by the Austrians as yet. The real movement is on the right hand of the foreground, behind a spur of the isle, & out of sight of the enemy; where several large rafts & flat boats, each capable of carrying three hundred men, are floated out from a screened creek.

Chosen battalions enter upon these, which immediately begin to cross with their burden. Simultaneously from other screened nooks secretly prepared floating bridges, in sections, are moved forth,

joined together, & defended by those who crossed on the rafts.

At two o'clock in the morning the thousands of cooped soldiers begin to cross the bridges, producing a scene which, on such a scale, was never before witnessed in the history of war. A great discharge from the batteries accompanies this manoeuvre, arousing the Austrians to a like cannonade.

The night has been obscure for summer-time, & there is no moon. The storm now breaks in a tempestuous downpour, with lightning & thunder. The tumult of nature mingles so fantastically with the tumult of projectiles that flaming bombs & forked flashes cut the air in company, & the noise from the mortars alternates with the noise from the clouds.

From bridge to bridge & back again a gloomy-eyed figure stalks, as it has stalked the whole night long, with the restlessness of a wild animal. Plastered with mud, & dribbling with rainwater, it bears no resemblance to anything dignified or official. The figure is that of Napoléon, urging his multitudes over.

By daylight the great mass of the men is across the water. At six the rain ceases, the mist uncovers the face of the sun, which bristles on the helmets & bayonets of the French. A hum of amazement rises from the Austrian hosts, who turn staring faces eastward & perceive what has happened, & the columns of their enemies standing to arms on the same side of the stream with themselves, & ~~are~~ preparing to turn their left wing.

Napoléon rides along the front of his forces, which now spread out upon the plain, & are ranged in order of battle.

Dumb show ends, & the point of view changes.

Scene III

The Field of Wagram.

The battlefield is now viewed from the windows of a mansion at Wolkersdorf, to the rear of the Austrian position. The aspect of the windows is nearly south, & the prospect includes the plain of the Marchfeld ~~on the right~~, with the isled Danube & Loban in the extreme distance. Ten miles to the southwest the faint summit of the tower of St. Stephen's, Vienna, appears. On the ~~left rises~~ middle-left stands the compact plateau of Wagram, so regularly shaped as to seem as if constructed by art. ~~Over it~~ On the extreme left the July sun has lately risen.

Inside the room are discovered the Emperor Francis & some household officers in attendance; with ~~a~~ the War-Minister ~~of State~~, & Secretaries, at a table at the back. Through open doors can be seen in an outer apartment adjutants, equerries, aides, & other military ~~officials~~ men. An officer in waiting enters.

Officer.

During the night the French have shifted, sire,
And much revised their stations of the eve
By thwart & wheeling moves upon our left,
And on our centre — projects unforeseen
Till near accomplished.

Francis.

But I am advised
By oral message that the Archduke Charles,
Since the sharp strife last night, has mended, too,
His earlier dispositions, & has sped
Strong orders to the Archduke John, to bring
In swiftest marches all the force he holds
And fall with heavy impact on the French,
From nigh their rear?

Officer

'Tis good, sire. Such a stroke
Will raise an obstacle to their retreat
And refuge in the fastness of the isle;
And show this victory-spoilt adventurer
That striking with a river in his rear
Is not the safest tactic to be played
Against an Austrian army equipt like ours!

The Emperor Francis & others scrutinize through their glasses the positions & movements of the Austrian divisions, which appear on the plain as pale masses emitting flashes from arms & helmets under the July rays, & reaching from the Tower of Neusiedel on the left, past Wagram, into the village of Stammersdorf on the right. Beyond their lines are spread out the darker-hued French, almost parallel to the Austrians.

Francis

Those moving masses toward the right I deem

The forces of Klenau & Kollowrath,
Sent to support Prince John of Lichtenstein
In his attack that way?

An interval.

Now that they've gained
The right there, why is not the attack begun?

Officer.

They are beginning on the left wing, sire.

The Emperor resumes his glass & beholds bodies of men descending from the hills by Neusiedel, & crossing the Russbach river towards the French — a movement which has been going on for some time.

Meanwhile the French advance upon our midst!

Francis (*turning thither*)

Where we are weakest! It surpasses me
To understand why was our centre thinned
To ~~bolster~~ pillar up our right already strong,
Where nought is doing, while our left attack
Stands ill-supported?

Time passes in silence.

it is so... See,
Yes; ~~tis~~ it is so. ~~You~~ see,
The enemy strikes Rossenberg in flank,
Compelling him to fall behind the Russbach!

The Emperor gets excited, & his face perspires. At length he cannot

watch through his glass, & walks up & down.

Penned useless here my nerves prevent my sight!
Inform me what you note. — I should opine
The Wagram height behind impregnable.

Another silence, broken by the distant roar of the guns.

Officer (*at his glass*).

Klenau & Kollowrath are getting on!
To turn the enemy's left with our strong right
Is, after all, a plan that works out well.
Hiller & Lichtenstein conjoin therein.

Francis.

I hear from thence appalling cannonades.

Officer.

'Tis theirs, your Majesty. Now we shall see
If the French read that there the danger lies.

Francis.

I only pray that Bonaparte refrain
From spying danger there till all too late!

Officer (*involuntarily, after a pause*)

Ah, Heaven!

Francis (*turning sharply*)

Well, well? What changes are there now?

Officer.

They pierce our centre, sire! We are, despite,
Not centrally so weak as I supposed.
Well done, Bellegarde!

Francis (glancing to the centre)

And what has he well done?

Officer.

The French broke through Aderklaa, alas:
But Bellegarde, nearing on the plain behind,
Has charged & driven them back disorderly.
The Archduke Charles hastes thither, as I hope,
In person to support him.

The Emperor returns to his spyglass; & they & others watch in silence, sometimes the right of their front, sometimes the centre.

Francis.

It is so!
That right attack of ours spells victory,
And Austria's grand salvation!... (Time passes.) Turn your glass,
And closely scan Napoléon & his aides
Hand-galloping towards his centre-left
To strengthen it against the brave Bellegarde.
Do you not see him? — That white horse, alone
In front of those that move so rapidly.

Officer.

I do, sire; though my glass is not of power

To match your majesty's.... That horse must be
The famed Euphrates, – him the Persian King
Sent Bonaparte as gift.

A silence. Napoléon reaches the carriage that bears Masséna, who having received a recent wound, is unable to ride.

Francis.

See, the white horse & horseman pause beside
A coach for some strange reason present there.....
That white-horsed rider – yes – is Bonaparte,
By the aides hasting off.....
New orders have been issued; we shall see
Their outcome soon enough. (An interval). The French begin
To stand to our battalions steadfastly.
They hold their ground having the Emperor near!

Time passes. An aide-de-camp enters.

Aide.

The Archduke Charles is pierced in the shoulder, sire;
He strove too far in beating back the French
At Aderklaa, & was nearly ta'en.
The wound's not serious. – On our right we win,
And deem the battle ours.

Enter another Aide-de-camp.

Second Aide.

Your majesty,

We have driven them back through Aspern village-street
And Essling is recovered. What counts more,
Their bridges to the rear we have nearly gained;
And panic-struck they crowd the few left free,
Choking the track, mid cries of All is lost!

FRANCIS.

Then is the land delivered. God be praised!

Exeunt aides.

An interval, during which the Emperor & his companions again ~~look~~ remain anxiously ~~through~~ at their glasses.

There is a curious feature ~~that I catch~~ I discern
Of late ~~come upon~~ come o'er the battle. On our right
We (rapidly) gain ground; upon the left
We lose it; and the unjudged consequence
Is that the ~~army's~~ armies' whole commingling mass
Moves ~~as~~ like a monstrous wheel. I care not for it!

Enter another aide-de-camp.

THIRD AIDE.

Our left wing, sire, recedes before Davout,
Whom nothing can withstand! Two corps he sent
Across the Russbach up to Neusiedel,
While he himself ~~attacked~~ assailed the place in front.
Of the divisions one pressed on & on,
~~Gaining the top~~ Till lodged atop. They would have been hurled back —

Francis.

But how ~~does~~ goes it ~~go~~ with us in sum: pray say!

Third aide.

We have been ~~[illegible]~~ battered off the eastern side
Of Wagram plateau.

Francis.

Where's the Archduke John?
Why comes he not? ~~[illegible]~~ a man of his just now
~~Be~~ Were worth a host anon! And yet he tarries!

Exit third aide

Time passes, while they reconnoitre the field with strained eyes.

Our centre-right, it seems, round Neusiedel,
Is being repulsed! May the kind Heaven forbid
That Hesse Homberg should be yielding there!

The Minister in attendance comes forward, & the Emperor consults him: then ~~he~~ walks back & up & down in silence. Another aide-de-camp enters.

Fourth aide

Sire, Neusiedel has just been wrenched from us,
And the French right is on the Wagram crest;
Nordmann has fallen, & Veczay: Hesse Homberg,
Warteachben, Muger – almost all our best –
Bleed more or less profusely!

A gloomy silence. Exit fourth aide. Ten minutes pass. Enter an officer in waiting.

Francis.

What guns are those that groan from Wagram height?

Officer.

Alas, Davout's! I have climbed the roof-top, sire,
And there discerned the truth.

Cannonade continues. A long interval of suspense. The Emperor returns to his glass.

Francis.

A part of it!
There seems to be a grim, concerted ~~[illegible]~~ lunge
By the whole strength of France, upon our right,
Centre, & left wing simultaneously!

Officer.

Most vigorously upon the centre, sire,
If I ~~mistake~~ mistook not, hard by Sussenbrunn:
The ~~columns~~ assault is led by Bonaparte in person,
Who shows himself with marvellous recklessness,
~~And~~ Yet (receives no ~~hit~~ hurt.) like a phantom-fiend.

Francis (still gazing)

Ha! Now the Archduke Charles has seen the intent,
And taken steps against it. – Sussenbrunn
Must be the threatened point. (Silence) – What an advance! –
Straight hitherward. Our centre girdles them. –
Surely they'll not persist? Who heads that charge?

Officer.

They say Macdonald, sire.

Francis.

But small remains

Will there be soon of those in that advance!
We are burning them to bones by our hot fire.
They are almost circumscribed: if fully so
The battle's ours! – What's that behind them, eh?

Officer.

Their last reserves, that they may prop the front,
And sterilize our hope!

Francis

Yes, the reserve –
Cuirassiers & dragoons – charge ~~to~~ in support.
You see their metal gleaming as they come.
Well, it is neck or nothing for them now!

Officer.

It's nothing, sire. Their charge of cavalry
Has desperately failed.

Francis.

Their foot press on,
However, with a battery in front
Which deals the foulest mischief done us yet! (Time passes)
They are effecting it there, after all.

Who would have reckoned on't — our men so firm!

Re-enter First aide-de-camp.

First aide.

The Archduke Charles retreats, your majesty;
And ~~things look~~ th' issue wears a dirty look just now.

Francis (gloomily)

Yes: I have seen as much for some ~~short~~ good while.
But he retreats with blows, & orderly.

Time passes, till the sun has rounded far towards the west. The features of the battle now materially change. The French have regained Aspern & Essling: the Austrian army is doubled back from the Danube & from the heights of Wagram which, as viewed from Wolkersdorf, quiver in the afternoon heat, the French established thereon glittering in the rays. ~~of it~~

Francis (choking a sigh)

The turn has passed. We are worsted, but not whelmed!...
The French advance is laboured, & but slow.
— This might have been another-coloured day
If but the Archduke John had come up promptly!
Yet still he lags.

Another officer (lately entered)

He's just now coming, Sire.
His columns glimmer in the Frenchmen's rear,

Past Siebenbrunn's & Leobensdorf's smoked hills.

Francis (impatiently)

Ay — coming now! Why could he not be come!

(They watch intently)

We can see nothing of that side from here.

Enter a General Officer, who speaks to the ~~a~~ Minister at the back ~~end~~ of the room.

Minister (coming forward)

Your Majesty, I now have to suggest,
Pursuant to conclusions reached this morn,
That since the front & flower of all our force
Is seen receding to the Bisamberg,
These walls no longer yield safe shade for you,
Or facile outlook. Scouts returning say
Either Davout, or Bonaparte himself,
With the mid. columns of his forward ~~[illegible]~~ corps,
Will bear up hitherward in ~~his~~ fierce pursuit,
And may intrude beneath this very roof. —
Not yet, I think; it may not be to-night;
But we should stand prepared.

Francis.

If we must go
We'll go with a good grace, unfeignedly!
Who knows to-morrow may not see regained
What we have lost to-day?

Re-enter fourth Aide-de-camp.

Fourth Aide (breathlessly)

The Archduke John,
Discerning our main body in retreat,
Abandons an advance that throws on him
The enemy's whole weight if he come on.

Francis.

Alas for his devotion! Let us go.
Such weight of sadness as we shoulder now
Will wring us down to sleep in stall or stye,
If even that be found!..... Think! Bonaparte,
By reckless riskings of his life & limb,
Has turned the steelyard of our strength to-day,
Whilst I have idled here!..... May brighter times
Attend the cause of Europe far in Spain,
And ~~Engl~~ British blood flow not, as ours, in vain!

(Exeunt the Emperor Francis, ministers, officers & attendants.)

The night comes, & the scene is obscured.

Scene IV.

The Field of Talavera.

It is the same month & weather as in the preceding scene.

Talavera town, on the River Tagus, is at the extreme right of the foreground; a mountain-range on the extreme left.

The ~~English~~ allies army under Sir Arthur Wellesley stretches between, the English on the left, the Spanish on the right, part holding a hill to the left-centre of the scene, divided from the mountains by a valley, & part holding ~~a~~ a redoubt to the right-centre. This army of more than fifty thousand all told, of which twenty two thousand only are English, has its back to the spectator.

Beyond, in a wood of olive, oak, & cork, are the fifty to sixty thousand French, facing the spectator & the allies. Their right includes a strong battery upon a hill which fronts the hill on the English left.

Behind all, the heights of Salinas close the prospect, the River Albreche flowing at their foot from left to right into the Tagus, which advances in foreshortened perspective to the town at the right front corner of the scene as aforesaid.

Dumb Show.

The hot & dusty July afternoon having turned to twilight, shady masses of men start into motion from the French position, come

towards the foreground, silently ascend the hill on the left of the English, & assail the latter in a violent outburst of fire & lead. They nearly gain possession of the hill assailed.

Mr Clodd
a dinner

Chorus of Rumours (aerial music)

Ten of the night is Talavera tolling:
Now do Ruffin's ranks come surging upward,
Backed by bold Vilatte's. Lapisse from the vale, too,
Darkly upswells there:—

Downhill from the crest the English fling them,
And with their bayonets roll the enemy backward:
So, the first fierce charge of the ardent Frenchmen
England repels there!

Having fallen back into the darkness the French presently reascend in yet larger masses. The high square knapsack which every English foot-soldier carries, & his hat, & his tuft, outline themselves against the dim light as the ranks stand awaiting the shock.

Chorus of Rumours.

Pushing they spread, & shout as they reach the summit,
Strength & stir new-primed in their plump battalions:
Puffs of flame blown forth on the lines opposing
Higher and higher.

There those hold them mute, though at speaking distance—
Mute, while the clicking flints, & the crash of the volley

Throw on the weighted gloom an immense distraction
Pending their fire.

Fronting visages each ranksman sees there,
Epaulettes, & cheeks, & shining eyeballs,
(Called from the dark a trice by the fleeting pan-flash)
~~High~~ Pressing them nigher!

The French again fall back in disorder into the hollow, & Lapisse draws off on the right. As the sinking sound of the muskets tells what has happened the English raise a shout.

Chorus of Pities.

Thus the dim nocturnal noise of the conflict
Closes with the receding roar of the gun-fire.
Harness loosened then, & their day-long ~~[illegible]~~ strenuous
Strain unbending,

Worn-out lines lie down where they late ~~were standing~~ stood staunchly
Cloaks around them rolled — by the bivouac embers:
There to pursue at dawn the dynast's death-game
Unto the ending!

Scene V.

The Same.

Dumb Show (continued).

The morning breaks. There is another murderous attempt to dislodge the English from the hill, the assault being pressed with a determination that excites the admiration of the English themselves.

The French are seen descending into the valley, crossing it, & climbing it on the other side under the fire of Hill's whole division, all to no purpose. In their retreat they leave behind them on the slopes ~~of the hill~~ nearly two thousand lying.

The day advances to noon, & the air shakes with the intense heat. The combat flags, & is suspended.

Spirit of the Pities.

What do I see but thirsty throbbing bands
From these inimic lines defiling down
In homely need towards the little stream
That parts their enmities, & drinking there.
They get to grasping hands across the rill,
Sealing their sameness as earth's sojourners. —
What more could plead the verity of these crimes
Than such unstudied piteous pantomimes!

Spirit Ironic

It is only that Life's queer mechanics chance to work out

in this ~~tenebrous~~ grotesque shape just now. The ~~immanent~~ groping tentativeness of an Immanent Will (as grey old Years describes it) cannot be asked to learn logic at this time of day! The spectacle of these men, made to riddle one another's thoraxes, & then to drink together in peace & ~~amity~~ concord, is where the humour comes in, & makes the play worth seeing!

Spirit Sinister.

Come, sprite, don't carry your ironies too far, or you may wake up the Unconscious Itself, & tempt It to let all the clockwork of the show run down to spite us! Where will be our theatre then, & where my enjoyment?

The drums roll, & the men of the two nations part from their ~~friendly~~ ~~drinking~~ comradeships at the Albearche, the dark masses of the French army assembling anew. Sir Arthur Wellesley has seated himself on a mound that commands a full view of the contested hill, & remains there motionless a long time. When the French form for battle he is seen to have come to a conclusion. He mounts, gives his orders, & the aides ride off.

The French advance steadily through the sultry atmosphere, the skirmishers in front, & the columns after, moving, yet seemingly motionless. Their eighty cannon peal out & their shots mow every space in the line of them. Up the great valley & the terraces of the hill whose fame is at that moment being woven, comes Vilatte, boring his way with foot & horse, & Ruffin's men following behind.

According to the order given, the Twenty third Light Dragoons & the German Hussars ~~charge~~ advance at a chosen moment against the head of these columns. On the way they disappear.

Spirit of the Pities.

Why this development? What can have chanced?

Spirit of Rumour

It so befalls that as their chargers near
The inimical wall of flesh with its iron frise,
A treacherous chasm uptrips them: zealous men
And ~~[illegible]~~ docile horses, roll to dismal death
And horrid mutilation.

Spirit of the Pities.

Those who live
Even now advance! I'll see no more. Relate.

Spirit of Rumour.

Yes, those press on. Then further Frenchmen cross,
And Polish Lancers, & Westphalian Horse,
Who ~~spread~~ ring around these ~~fated~~ luckless Islanders,
And sweep them down like reeds by the river-brink
In scouring floods; till scarce a man remains.

Meanwhile on the British right Sebastiani's corps has precipitated itself in column against General Campbell's division, the division of Lapisse against the centre, & at the same time the hill

on the English left is again assaulted. The English are pressed sorely here, the bellowing battery tearing lanes through their masses.

Spirit of Rumour (continuing)

The French reserves of foot & horse now on,
Smiting the Islanders in breast & brain
Till their mid-lines are shattered.... Now there ticks
The moment of the crisis; now the next,
Which brings the turning stroke.

Sir Arthur Wellesley sends down the fortyeighth regiment under Colonel Donellan to support the wasting troops. It advances amid those retreating, opening to let them pass.

Spirit of Rumour (continuing)

Then pales, ~~impulsed~~ enerved,
The hitherto unflinching enemy!
Lapisse is pierced to death; the flagging French
Decline into the hollows whence they came.
The too exhausted English & reduced
Lack strength to follow. – Now the western sun,
Glaring with unmoved face on quick & dead,
Gilds horsemen slackening, & footmen stilled,
Till all around breathes drowsed hostility.
Last, the swealed herbage lifts a lurid light,
And flames traverse the field; & hurt & slain,
Opposed, opposers, in a common plight
Are scorched together on the dusk champaign.

The fire dies down, & darkness enwraps the scene.

A ~~Jones~~ ~~So Lucas~~

Scene VI.

Brighton. The Royal Pavilion.

It is the birthday dinner-party of the Prince of Wales. In the floridly decorated banqueting-room stretch tables spread with gold & silver plate, & having artificial fountains in their midst.

Seated at the tables are the Prince himself as host — rosy, well-curled, & affable — the Dukes of York, Clarence, Kent, Sussex, Cumberland, & Cambridge, with many noblemen, including Lords Headfort, Berkeley, Egremont, Chichester, Dudley, Say & Sele, Southampton, Heathfield, Erskine, Keith, C. Somerset, G. Cavendish, R. Seymour, & others; Sir C. Pole, Sir E. G. de Crespigny, Mr Sheridan; Generals, Colonels, & Admirals, & the Revd. Mr Scott.

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The Prince's band plays in an adjoining room. The banquet is drawing to its close, & a boisterous conversation is in progress.

Enter Colonel Bloomfield with a dispatch for the Prince, who looks it over amid great excitement in the company. In a few moments silence is called.

Prince of Wales.

I have the joy, my lords & gentlemen,
To rouse you with the just imported tidings
From General Wellesley through Lord Castlereagh (cheers)

Of a grand victory (noisy cheers) over the French in Spain.
The place — called Talavera de la Reyna
(If I pronounce it rightly) — long unknown,
Wears now the crest & blazonry of fame! (cheers).
The heads & chief contents of the dispatch
I read you as succinctly as I can. (cheers)

Sheridan (singing sotto voce)
"Now foreign foemen die & fly.
Dammy, we'll drink little England dry!"

The Prince reads the parts of the dispatch that describe the battle, amid intermittent cheers. ~~& continues:~~

Prince of Wales (continuing)
Such is the substance of the news received,
Which, after Wagram, strikes as genially
As sudden sunrise through ~~the nightly~~ befogged ~~fog~~ night shades.

Sheridan (privately)
By God, that's good, sir! You are a poet born, while the rest of us are but made.

The health of the army in Spain is drunk with acclamations.

Prince of Wales (continuing)
In this achievement we, alas, have lost
Too many! Yet such blanks must ever be. —
Mackenzie, Langworth, Beckett of the Guards,

Have fallen of ours; while of the enemy
Generals Lapisse & Morlot are laid low. —
Drink to their memories!

They drink in silence.

Other news, my friends,
Received to-day, is of like hopeful kind.
The Great War-Expedition to the Scheldt (*cheers*)
Which lately sailed, has found a favouring wind,
And by this hour has touched the destined shores.
The enterprize will now be hastened on,
The invaders making first the Cadsand coast,
And then descending on Walcheren Isle.
But items of the next step are withheld
Till later days, from obvious policy (*cheers*)

~~A~~ *Faint throbbing sounds, like the notes of double-bass instruments, reach the ear as the speaker pauses.*

In worthy emulation of us here
The county holds to-night a birthday ball,
Which flames with all the fashion of the town.
I have been asked to patronize their revel,
And sup with them, & likewise you, my guests.
We have good reason, with such news to bear!
Thither we haste & join our loyal friends,
And stir them with this hot intelligence
Of our staunch regiments on the Spanish plains (*applause*)

With them we'll now knit hands & beat the ground,
And bring in dawn as we whirl round & round.
There are some fair ones in their set to-night,
And such we need here in our bachelor-plight. (Applause)

The Prince, his brothers, & a large proportion of the other Pavilion guests, swagger out in the direction of the Castle Assembly-rooms adjoining, & the deserted Banqueting-hall grows dark. In a few moments the back of the scene opens, revealing the Assembly-rooms behind.

Scene VII

The Same. The Assembly-rooms.

The rooms are lighted with candles in brass chandeliers, & a dance is in full ~~speed~~ movement to the strains of a string-band. A signal is given, shortly after the clock has struck eleven, by Mr Forth, Master of Ceremonies.

Forth.

His Royal Highness comes, though somewhat late,
But never too late for welcome (applause). Dancers, stand,
That we may do fit homage to the Prince
Who soon may be our country's gracious king.

After a brief stillness a commotion is heard at the door, the band strikes up the National air, & the Prince enters accompanied by

the rest of the visitors from the Pavilion. The guests who have been temporarily absent now crowd in, till there is hardly space to stand.

Prince of Wales (wiping his face & whispering to Sheridan)

What shall I say to fit their feelings here?
Damn me, that other speech has stumped me quite!

Sheridan (whispering)

If heat be evidence of loy— ~~[illegible]~~

Prince of Wales

If what?

Sheridan

If heat be evidence of loyalty,
Et caetera — something ~~[illegible]~~ ~~shaped~~ neat like that might please 'em.

Prince of Wales (to the company)

If heat be evidence of loyalty,
This room affords it truly without question;
~~And~~ If heat ~~it~~ be not, then its accompaniment
Most surely 'tis to-night. — The news I bring
My ladies, friends, & gentlemen, perchance
You have divined already? That our arms —
Engaged to thwart Napoleon's tyranny
O'er ~~the~~ the fair ~~[illegible]~~ jaunty ~~[illegible]~~ jocund land of Spain
Even to the highest apex of our strength —
Are rayed with victory (cheers). Lengthy was the strife,
And fierce, & hot, & heavy, to sustain;

But proudly we endured it; & shall hear,
No doubt, of its fair consequence
Ere many days. I'll read the details sent (cheers)

He reads again from the dispatch amid more cheering, the ball-room guests crowding round. When he has done he answers questions.

Meanwhile our interest is, if possible,
As keenly ~~edged~~ waked elsewhere. Into the Scheldt
Some forty thousand bayonets & swords,
And two score ships o' the line, with frigates, sloops,
And gunboats ~~nigh three score~~ sixty more, make headway now,
Bleaching the waters with their bellying sails;
Or maybe they already anchor there
And that the levels of Walcheren shore
Ring with the voices of that landing host
In every shade of British dialect,
Bent thus on loosening fettered Europe's chain! (cheers)

A noble Lord (aside to Sheridan)

Prinny's outpouring tastes suspiciously like your brew, Sheridan. I'll be damned if it is his own concoction. How d'ye sell it a gallon?

Sheridan.

I don't ~~trade in~~ deal that way nowadays. I give the recipe, & charge a duty on the gauging. It is more artistic, & saves trouble.

The company proceed to the supper-rooms, & the ball-room sinks into ~~gloom~~ solitude.

~~Bb~~ Lucas for abbey

Spirit of the Pities

So they pass on. Let be! — But what is this —
A moan? — that comes slow-floating from the east
To usward, even from the forenamed isle?...
Would I had not broke nescience, to inspect
A world so ill-contrived!

Spirit of the Years.

But since thou hast
We'll hasten to the isle; & thou'lt behold —
Such as it is — the scene its coasts enfold.

Scene VIII

Walcheren.

A marshy island at the mouth of the Scheldt, lit by the low sunshine of an evening in late summer. The horizontal rays from the west lie in yellow sheaves across the vapours that the day's heat has drawn from the sweating soil. Sour grasses grow in places, & strange fishy smells, now warm, now cold, pass along. Brass-hued & opalescent bubbles, compounded of many gases, rise where passing feet have trodden the damper spots. At night the place is the haunt of the Jack-lantern.

Dumb Show.

A vast army is encamped here, & in the open spaces are infantry on parade — skeleton-men, some flushed, some shivering, who are kept moving because it is dangerous to stay still. Every

now & then one falls down, & is carried away to a hospital with no roof, where he is laid, bedless, on the ground.

In the distance soldiers are digging graves for the funerals which are to take place after dark, delayed till then that the sight of so many may not drive the living melancholy-mad. Faint noises are heard in the air.

Shade of the Earth.

What storm is this of souls dissolved in sighs,
And what the dingy doom it signifies?

Spirit of ~~Rumour~~ the Pities.

We catch a lamentation shaped thuswise:

Chorus of ~~Rumours~~ Pities (aerial music)

"We who withstood the blasting blaze of war
When ~~gen~~ marshalled by the gallant Moore awhile,
Beheld the ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ death-bolt with a smile,
Closed combat edge to edge & bore to bore,
Now rot upon this Isle.

"The ever wan morass, the dune, the blear
Sand-weed, & tepid pool, & putrid smell,
Emaciate purpose to a factious fear,
Beckon the body to its last low cell—
A chink no chart will tell.

"O ancient Delta where the fen-lights flit
Ignoble sediment of loftier lands,
Thy humour clings about our hearts & hands
And solves us to its softness, till we sit
As we were part of it.

"Such force as fever leaves is maddened now,
With tidings trickling in from day to day
Of others' differing fortunes, wording how
They yield their lives to baulk a tyrant's sway—
Yielded not vainly, they!

"In champaigns green & purple, far & near,
In town & thorpe where quiet spire-cocks turn,
Through vales, by rocks, beside the brooding burn
Echoes the aggressor's arrogant career;
And we pent powerless here!

"Here, where each creeping day the creeping file
Draws past with shouldered comrades score on score,
Bearing them to their lightless last asile,
Where weary wave-wails from the clammy shore
Will reach their ears no more.

We might have fought, & had we died, died well,
Even though in Dynasts' discords not our own;
Our death-spot some sad haunter might have shown,
Some tongue have asked our sires or sons to tell
The tale of how we fell.

"But such bechanced not. Like the mist we fade,
In history's page no feats engraved have we,
Our country's heads, for their own fames afraid,
Will leave our names & fates by this lone sea
To perish silently."

Spirit of the Years.

Why must ye echo as mechanic mimes
These mortal minions' bootless cadences,
Played on the stops of their anatomy
As is the mewling music on the strings
Of yonder ship-masts by the unconscious wind,
Or the frail tune upon this withering sedge
That holds its papery blades against the gale?
Men pass to dark corruption, at the best,
Ere I can count five score: these why not now? —
The Immanent Shaper builds Its beings so
Whether ye sigh their sighs with them or no!

The night-fog enwraps the Isle & the English army.

Act Fifth.

Scene I.

Paris. A Ball-room in the house of Cambacérès.

The many-candled ~~room~~ saloon at the Arch-Chancellor's is visible through a draped archway, & a crowd of masked dancers in fantastic costumes revolve, sway, & intermingle to the music that proceeds from an alcove at the further end of the same apartment. The front of the scene is a withdrawing-room of smaller size, now vacant, save for the presence of one sombre figure, that of Napoléon, seated, & apparently watching the moving masquerade.

Spirit of the Pities

Napoléon even now ~~does not~~ unbraces not
From stress of state affairs, which hold him grave
Though revels that might win the King of Spleen
To toe a measure! I would speak with him.

Spirit of the Years.

Speak if thou wilt whose speech nor mars nor mends!

Spirit of the Pities (into Napoléon's ear)

Why thus & thus Napoléon? Can it be

That Wagram with its glories, shocks, & shames,
Still leaves athirst the palate of thy pride?

Napoleon (in soliloquy)

The trustless timorous lease of human life
~~[illegible]~~ Warns me to hedge in my diplomacy.
The sooner, ~~sternest~~ then, the safer! Ay, this eve,
This very night, will I take steps to ~~ward~~ rid
My morrows of the weird contingencies
That vision round & make one hollow-eyed ....
The unexpected, lurid death of Lannes –
Rigid as iron, reaped down like a straw –
Tiptoed Assassination haunting round
In unthought thoroughfares, the near success
Of Staps the madman, argue to forbid
The riskful blood of my previsioned line
And potence for dynastic empery
To linger vialled in my veins alone.
Perhaps within this very house & hour,
Under an innocent mask of Love or Hope,
Some enemy queues my ways to coffin me ....
When at the first clash of the late campaign,
A bold belief in Austria's star prevailed,
There pulsed quick pants of expectation round
Among the cowering kings, that too well told
What would have fared had I been overthrown.

So; I must send down shoots to future time
Who'll guard my standard & my story there:
And a way opens. — Better I had not
Bespoke a wife from Alexander's house.
Not there now lies my aim. But ~~[illegible]~~ what's done's done.

M Abley
H Slater

The dance ends & masks enter, Berthier among them. Napoléon beckons to him, & he comes forward.

God send you find amid this motley crew
Frivolities enough, friend Berthier — eh?
My thoughts have worn oppressive tints despite such!
What scandals of me do they bandy here?
These close disguises render women bold —
Their shames being of the light, not of the thing —
And your sagacity has garnered much,
I make no doubt, of ill & good report,
That marked our absence from the capital?

Berthier.

Methinks, your Majesty, the enormous Tale
Of your campaign, like Aaron's serpent-rod,
Has swallowed up the smaller of its kind.
Some speak, 'tis true, in counterpoise thereto
Of English deeds by Talavera town,
Though blurred by their exploit at Walcheren,
And all its crazy crass futilities.

Napoléon.

Yet was it finely featured in design,
Large in idea, & imaginative;
I had not deemed the blinkered English folk
So capable of view. Then fate contrived
To place an idiot at the helm of it,
Who marred its working, else had it been hard
If things had not gone seriously for us.
— But see, a lady saunters hitherward
Whose gait proclaims her Madame Metternich,
One that I fain would speak with.

Napoléon rises & crosses the room towards a lady masker who has just appeared in the opening. Berthier draws off, & the Emperor, unceremoniously taking the lady's arm, brings her forward to a chair, & sits down beside her as dancing is resumed.

Madame Metternich.

In a flash
I recognized you, sire; as who would not
The bearer of such deep-delved charactery!

Napoléon.

The devil, Madame, take your piercing eyes!
It's hard I cannot prosper in a game
That every coxcomb plays successfully.
— So here you are still, though your loving lord
Disports him at Vienna?

Madame Metternich.

Paris, true,
Still holds me; though in quiet, save to-night.
When I have been expressly prayed come hither,
Or I had not left home.

Napoléon.

I sped that prayer.—
I have a wish to put a case to you,
Wherein a woman's judgment, such as yours,
May be of signal service. (*He lapses into reverie.*)

Madame Metternich.

Well? The case—

Napoléon.

Is marriage—mine.

Madame Metternich.

It is beyond me, sire!

Napoléon

You glean that I have decided to dissolve
(Pursuant to monitions murmured long)
My union with the present Empress—formed
Without the Church's due authority?

Madame Metternich.

Vaguely. And that ~~some~~ light tentatives have winged

Betwixt your Majesty & Russia's court,
To moot that one of their Grand-duchesses
Should be your Empress-wife. Nought else I know.

Napoléon.

There have been such approachings; more, worse luck.
Last week Champagny wrote to Alexander
Asking him for his sister – yes or no.

Madame Metternich.

What "worse luck" lies in that, your Majesty,
If severance from the Empress Joséphine
Be fixed unalterably?

Napoléon.

This worse luck lies in't.
If your Archduchess, Marie Louise the fair,
Would straight accept my hand, I'd offer it,
And throw the other over. Faith, the Tsar
Has shown such backwardness in answering me,
193/0 Time meanwhile pressing, that I have ample ground
For such withdrawal. – Madame, now, again,
Will your Archduchess marry me or no?
That is, will her good ~~father~~ sire assent thereto?

Madame Metternich

Your sudden questions quite confound my sense!
It is impossible to answer them.

Napoléon.

Well, madame, now I'll put it to you thus:
Were you in the Archduchess Marie's place
Would you accept my hand — & heart therewith?

Madame Metternich.

I should refuse you — most assuredly! ※

Napoléon (laughing roughly)

Ha-ha! That's frank. And devilish cruel too!
— Well, write to your husband. Ask him what he thinks,
And let me know.

Madame Metternich.

Indeed, Sire, why should I?
There goes the Ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg,
Successor to my spouse. He's now the groove
And proper conduit of diplomacy
Through whom to broach this matter to his Court.

Napoléon.

Do you, then, broach it through him, madame, pray;
Now, here, to-night.

Madame Metternich.

I will, informally.
To humour you, on this recognizance

※ So Madame Metternich ~~[illegible]~~ to her husband in reporting this interview. But who shall say!

That you leave not the business in my hands,
But clothe your project in official guise
Through him to-morrow; so safeguarding me
From foolish seeming, as the babbler forth
Of a fantastic & unheard of dream.

~~H Slater~~ [illegible]

Napoléon.

I'll send Eugène to him as you suggest.
Meanwhile prepare him. Make your standpoint this:
Children are needful to my dynasty,
And if one woman cannot mould them for me,
Why, then, another must.

Exit Napoléon abruptly.

Dancing continues. Madame Metternich sits on, musing.
Enter Schwarzenberg.

Madame Metternich

The Emperor has just left me. We have tapped
This theme & that; his Empress and — his next.
Ay, so! Now, guess you anything?

Schwarzenberg.

Of her?
No more than that the stock of Romanoff
Will not supply the spruce commodity.

Madame Metternich.

And that the would-be customer turns toe

To our shop in Vienna. ~~To ov~~

Schwarzenberg.

Marvellous;
And comprehensible but as the dream
Of Delaborde, of which I have lately heard.
It will not work! – What think you, Madame, on't?

Madame Metternich.

That it will work, & is as good as done! –
I break it to you thus, at his request.
In good time Prince Eugène will wait on you,
And make the formal offer in his name.

Schwarzenberg.

Which I can but receive ad referendum,
And shall initially make clear as much,
Disclosing not a glimpse of my own mind!
Meanwhile you make good Metternich aware?

Madame Metternich.

I write this midnight, that ~~surprise~~ amaze may pitch
To coolness ere your courier arrives.

Schwarzenberg.

This radiant revelation ~~throws~~ flecks a gleam
On many circling things! – the courtesies
Which graced his bearing towards our officers

Amid the tumults of the late campaign,
His wish for peace with England, his affront
At Alexander's tedious-timed reply.....
Well, ~~this~~ it will thrust a thorn in Russia's side,
If I err not, whatever else betide!

Exeunt.

The maskers now surge into the foreground of the scene, & their motions become more & more fantastic. A strange gloom begins & intensifies, until only the high lights of their grinning figures are visible. These also, with the whole ball-room, gradually darken, & the music softens to silence.

Scene II.

Paris. The Tuileries.

The evening of the next day. A saloon with folding-doors in the centre, communicating with a dining-room. The doors are flung open, revealing on the dining-table an untouched dinner, Napoléon & Joséphine rising from it, & de Bausset, chamberlain-in-waiting, pacing up & down. The Emperor & Empress come forward into the saloon, the latter pale & distressed, & patting her eyes with her handkerchief.

The doors are closed behind them; a page brings in coffee; Napoléon signals to him to leave. Joséphine goes to pour out the

coffee, but Napoléon pushes her aside & pours it out himself, looking at her in a way which causes her to sink cowering into a chair like a frightened animal.

Joséphine.

I see my doom, my friend, upon your face!

Napoléon.

You see I am tired – by Cambacérès' ball.

Josephine.

It means divorce – a thing more terrible
Than carrying elsewhere the dalliances
That formerly were mine. I kicked at that;
But now agree, as I for long have done,
To any infidelities of act
May I be yours in name!

Napoléon

My mind must bend
To other things than our domestic pettings:
The Empire stands before our happiness,
And 'tis the Empire dictates this divorce.
I reckon on your courage & good sense
To breast with me the law's formalities,
And get it through before the year has flown.

Joséphine

But are you really going to part from me?
O no, no, my dear husband; no, in truth,
It cannot be my Love will serve me so!

Napoléon.

I mean but mere divorcement, as I said,
On simple grounds of sapient sovereignty.

Joséphine.

But nothing have I done save good to you:—
Since the fond day we wedded into one
I never even have thought you jot of harm.
Many the happy junctures when you have said
I ~~was~~ ~~have been~~ stood as guardian angel ~~unto~~ over you,
~~And~~ As you Dame Fortune, too, & endless things
Of such-like pretty tenour — yes, you have!
Then how can you so turn against me now?
You had not spoken of it much of late,
And so I hoped & hoped the ugly thought
Had been laid dead & still.

Napoléon (impatiently)

I tell you, dear,
The thing's decreed, & even the princess chosen.

Joséphine.

Ah — so — the princess chosen! .... I surmise

It is none else than the Grand-duchess Anne:
Gossip was right – though I would not believe.
She's young; but no great beauty! – Yes, I see
Her silly soulless eyes & horrid hair;
In which new gauderies you'll forget sad me!

Napoléon.

Upon my soul you are childish, Joséphine:
A woman of your years to pout it so! –
I say 'tis not the Tsar's Grand-duchess Anne.

Joséphine.

Then be it some other ~~school girl~~ fair one. – You whose power
Can nod nigh all the world's virginity
Into your bed, will well take care of that!
(Spitefully) She may not have a child, friend, after all.

Napoléon (drily)

You hope she won't, I know! – But don't forget
Madame Walewska did, & had she shown
Such cleverness as yours, poor little fool,
Her withered husband ~~would~~ might have been displaced,
And her boy made my heir. – Well, let that be.
The severing parchments will be signed by us
Upon the fifteenth, prompt.

Joséphine.

What – I have to sign

My putting away upon the fifteenth next?

~~Mason~~

Napoléon.

History – both of us.

Joséphine (falling on her knees)

So far advanced – so far!

Fixed? – for the fifteenth? O I do implore you

My very dear one, by our old old love,

By my devotion, don't, don't cast me off

Now, after these long years!

Napoléon

~~God~~ Heavens, how you bore me!

Must I repeat that I don't cast you off:

We merely formally arrange divorce –

We live & love, but call ourselves divided.

A silence.

Joséphine (with sudden calm)

Very well. Let it be. I must submit.

Napoleon.

And this much likewise you must promise me

To act in the formalities thereof

As if you shaped them of your own free will.

Joséphine

How can I – when no freewill's left in me!

Napoléon.

You are a willing party — do you hear?

Joséphine (quivering)

I hardly — can — bear this! — It is — too much
For a poor weak & broken woman's strength!
But — but I yield! — I am so helpless now;
I give up all — ay, kill me if you will,
I won't cry out!

Napoléon

And one thing further still,
You'll help me in my marriage overtures
To win the duchess — Austrian Marie she, —
Concentring all your force to forward them.

Joséphine.

It is the — last humiliating blow! —
I cannot — O, I will not!

Napoléon

But you shall!
And from your past experience you may know
That what I say I mean.

Joséphine (breaking into sobs)

O my dear husband — do not make me — don't!
If you but cared for me — the hundredth part
Of how — I care for you, you could not be

So cruel as to ~~force~~ lay this torture on me.
It hurts me so! – it cuts me like a sword.
Don't make me, dear! Don't, will you! O, O, O!

(She sinks down in a hysterical fit)

Napoléon (calling)

Bausset!

Enter de Bausset, Chamberlain-in-waiting.

Bausset, come in & shut that door.
Assist me here. The Empress has fallen ill.
Don't call for help. We two can carry her
By the small private staircase to her rooms.
Here – I can take her feet.

They lift Joséphine between them & carry her out. Her moans die away as they recede towards the stairs.

Enter two servants, who remove coffee-service, readjust chairs, &c.

First servant.

So, she's wailed her ~~Salve~~ Miserere mei, as Mother Church says, (poor old girl,) I knew ~~it would be so~~ she was to get the sack ever since he came back.

Second Servant.

Well, there will be a little civil huzzaing, a little crowing & cackling among the Bonapartes at the downfall of the

Beauharnais family at last, mark me there will! They've had their little hour, as the poets say, & now 'twill be somebody else's turn. O it is droll! Well, ~~Life~~ Holy Mary is a great philosopher if you take ~~him~~ her right. Who is to be the new woman?

First Servant.

She that contains in her own corporation the necessary particulars.

Second Servant

And what may they be?

First Servant.

She must be young.

Second Servant.

Good. She must. The country must see to that.

First servant.

And she must be ~~strong~~ ~~healthy~~.

Second servant.

Good again. She must be ~~healthy~~ strong. The doctors will see to that.

First servant.

And she must be fruitful as the vine.

Second Servant.

Ay, by God. She must be fruitful as the vine. That, Heaven help him, he must see to himself, like the meanest multiplying man in Paris!

Exeunt servants.

Re-enter Napoleon with his stepdaughter Queen Hortense.

Napoléon.

Your mother is too rash & reasonless –
Crying & fainting over statesmanship
Which is no personal caprice of mine,
But policy most painful – forced on me
By the necessities of this country's charge.
Go to her; see if she be saner now;
Explain it to her once & once again,
And bring me word what impress you may make.

Hortense goes out. Champagny is shown in.

Champagny, I have something clear to say
Now, on our process after the divorce.
The question of the Russian Duchess Anne
Was quite inept for further toying with.
The ~~the~~ white years rush on, & I grow nothing younger.
I have made up my mind – committed me
To Austria & the Hapsburgs – good or ill!
It was the best, most practicable plunge,
And I have plunged it.

Champagny.

Austria say you, sire?
I reckoned that but as a scurrying dream!

Napoléon

Well, so it was. But such a pretty dream
That its own charm transfixed it to a notion,
Which hardened in its turn to a resolve
As firm as any built by mortal mind.—
The Emperor's consent must needs be won,
But I foresee no difficulty there.
The young Archduchess is a bright blond thing
By general story; & considering, too,
That her good mother childed seventeen times,
It will be hard if she can not ~~produce~~ ~~achieve~~
The modest one or two that I require.

Enter de Bausset with dispatches.

de Bausset.

The courier, sire, from Petersburg is here,
And brings these letters for your Majesty.
Exit de Bausset.

Napoléon (after silently reading)

Ha-ha! It never rains unless it pours:
Now I can have the other readily.
The proverb hits me aptly: "Well they do
Who doff the old love ere they don the new!"
(He glances again over the letter)
Yes, Caulaincourt now writes he has every hope
Of quick success in settling the alliance!

The Tsar is willing — even is anxious for it,
His sister's youth the single obstacle.
The Empress-mother, hitherto against me,
Ambition-fired, verges on suave consent,
Likewise the whole Imperial family.
What irony is all this to me now!
Time lately was when I had leapt thereat.

Champagny.

You might, of course, sire, give th' Archduchess up,
Seeing she looms uncertainly as yet,
While this does so no longer.

Napoléon.

No — not I.
My sense of my own dignity forbids
My watching the slow clocks of Muscovy!
Why have they dallied with my tentatives
In pompous silence since the Erfurt day?
— And Austria, too, affords a safer hope.
The young Archduchess is much less a child
Than is the other, who, Caulaincourt says,
Will be incapable of motherhood
For six months yet or more — a grave delay.

Champagny.

Your Majesty appears to have trimmed your sail

For Austria; & no more is to be said!

Napoléon.

Except that there's the house of Saxony
If Austria fail. — Then very well, Champagny,
Write you to Caulaincourt accordingly.

Champagny.

I will, your Majesty.

Exit Champagny.

Re-enter Queen Hortense

Napoléon.

Ah, dear Hortense,
How is your mother now?

Hortense.

Calm; quite calm, sire.
I pledge me you need have no further ~~fear~~ fret
From her entreating tears. She bids me say
That now, as always, she submits herself
With chastened dignity to circumstance,
And will descend, at notice, from your throne —
As in days earlier she ascended it —
In questionless obedience to your will.
It was your hand that crowned her; let it be
Likewise your hand that takes ~~the~~ her crown away.

As for her children, we shall be but glad
To follow & withdraw ourselves with her,
The tenderest mother children ever knew,
From grandeurs that have brought no happiness!

<u>Napoléon</u> (taking her hand)

But, Hortense, dear, it is not to be so!
You must stay with me, as I said before.
Your mother, too, must keep her royal state,
Since no repudiation stains this deed.
Equal magnificence will orb her round
In aftertime as now. A palace here,
A palace in the country, wealth to match,
A rank in order next my future wife's,
And conference with me as my truest friend.
Now we will seek her – Eugène, you, & I –
And make the project clear.

<u>Exeunt</u> <u>Napoléon</u> & <u>Hortense</u>

<u>The Scene darkens & shuts</u>.

Scene III

Vienna. A Private apartment in the Imperial Palace.

The Emperor Francis discovered, paler than usual & somewhat flurried.

Enter Metternich the prime Minister — a thin-lipped, long-nosed man with inquisitive eyes.

Francis.

I have been expecting you some minutes here,
The thing that fronts us brooking scant delay. —
Well, what say you by now on this strange offer?

Metternich.

My views remain the same, your Majesty:
The policy of peace that I have upheld,
Both while in Paris & of late time here,
Points to this step as heralding repose
And bandaged veins for our late crimsoned realm.

Francis.

Agreed. As monarch I perceive therein
A happy doorway for my purposings.
It seems to guarantee the Hapsburg crown
A quittance of distractions such as those
That leave their shade on many a backward year! —

There is, forsooth, a suddenness about it.
And it would aid us had we ascertained
How stands the ~~pact~~ parle, of which the world has heard
Between Napoléon & the Russian Court —
Begun there with the selfsame motiving.

Metternich

I would not, sire, one second ponder it.
It was an obvious first crude cast about
In the important reckoning of means
For his great end, a strong ~~dynastic~~ monarchic line.
The more advanced the more it profits us;
For sharper, then, the quashing of such views,
And wreck of that conjunction in the aims
Of France & Russia, marked so much of late
As jeopardizing quiet neighbours' thrones.

Francis.

If that be so, on the domestic side
There seems no bar. Speaking as father solely,
I see secured to her the ~~fairest~~ proudest fate
That woman can daydream. And, I ~~even~~ ~~well~~ could hope
That ~~years of~~ private bliss would not be wanting her!

Metternich.

A hope well rooted, sire. The Emperor,
Imperious & determined in his rule,

Is easy-natured in domestic life,
As my long time in Paris amply showed.
Moreover the accessories of his glory
Have been, & will be, admirably designed
To fire the fancy of a young princess.

Francis.

Thus far you satisfy me ..... So, to close,
Or not to close with him, is now the thing.

Metternich.

Your Majesty commands the issue quite:
The Father of his people can alone
In such a case give answer – yes or no.
Vagueness & doubt have ruined Russia's chance;
Let not, then, such be ours.

Francis.

You mean, if I,
You'd answer straight – what would that answer be?

Metternich.

In state affairs, sire, as in private life,
Times will arise when even the faithfullest squire
Finds him unfit to take his ~~leader's~~ chieftain's place,
On whom responsibility must lastly rest.
And such times are preeminently, sire,
Those wherein thought alone is not enough

To serve the head as guide. As Emperor,
As father, both, to you, to you in sole
Must appertain the privilege to pronounce
Which track stern duty bids you trace herein.

A Pinnes

Francis.

McLean

Affection is my duty, heart my guide.—
Without constraint or prompting I shall leave
The big decision in my daughter's hands.
Before my obligations to my people
Must stand her wish. Go, find her Metternich,
Take her the tidings. She is free with you,
And will speak out.

(~~He~~ Looking forth upon the terrace.)

She's here at hand, I see:
I'll call her in. Then tell me what's her mind.

He beckons from the window, & goes out in another direction.

Metternich.

So much for form's sake! Can the river-~~we~~ flower
The current drags, direct its face upstream?
What she must do she will; nought else at all.

Enter through one of the windows Maria Louisa in garden-costume, fresh-coloured, girlish, & smiling. Metternich bends.

Maria Louisa

O; how, dear Chancellor, you startled me!

Please pardon my so brusquely bursting in.
I saw you not. — Those five poor little birds
That haunt out there beneath the pediment,
Snugly defended from the north-east wind,
Have lately disappeared. I sought a trace
Of scattered feathers, which I dread to find!

Metternich.

They are gone, I ween, the way of tender flesh
At the assaults of winter, want, & foes.

Maria Louisa.

It is too melancholy thinking, that!
Don't say it. — But I saw the Emperor here?
Surely he beckoned to me?

Metternich.

Sure, he did,
Your gracious highness; & he has left me here
To break vast news that will make good his call.

Maria Louisa

Then do. I'll listen. News from near or far?
She seats herself.

Metternich.

From far — though of such distance-dwarfing power
That far may read as near eventually.
But, dear Archduchess, will your gracious leave

I'll speak straight out. The Emperor of the French
Has sent today to make, through Schwarzenberg,
A formal offer of his heart & hand,
His honours, dignities, imperial throne,
To you, whom he admires above all those
The world can show elsewhere.

Maria Louisa.

My husband — he?
What, an old man like him!

Metternich (cautiously ~~nettled~~)

He's scarcely old,
Dear lady. — True, deeds densely crowd in him;
Turn months to years in calendaring his span;
Yet by Time's common clockwork he's but young.

Maria Louisa.

So wicked, too!

Metternich (nettled)

Well — that's a point of view.

Maria Louisa.

But, Chancellor, think what things I have said of him!
Can women marry where they have taunted so?

Metternich

Things? Nothing inexpungeable, I deem,
By time & true good humour.

Maria Louisa.

O I have!

Horrible things. Why — ay, a hundred times —
I have said I wished him dead! At that strained hour
When the first voicings of the late war came,
Thrilling out how the French were smitten sore
And Bonaparte retreating, I clapped hands
And answered that I hoped he'd lose his head
As well as lose the battle!

Metternich.

Words. But words!
Born like the bubbles of a spring that come
Of zest for springing — aimless in their shape.

Maria Louisa.

It seems indecent, mean, to wed a man
Whom one has held such fierce opinions of!

Metternich.

My/much beloved Archduchess & revered,
Such things have been! ~~before~~ In Spain & Portugal
Like enmities have led to intermarriage.
In England, after warring thirty years
The Red & White Rose wedded.

Maria Louisa (after a silence)

Tell me, now,
What does my father wish?

Metternich

His wish is yours.
Whatever your Imperial Highness feels
On this grave ~~question~~ verdict of your destiny,
Home, ~~future~~ title, future sphere, he bids you think
Not of himself, but of your own desire.

Maria Louisa (after reflection)

My wish is what my duty bids me wish.
Where a wide Empire's welfare is in ~~balance~~ poise,
That welfare must be pondered, not my will.
I ask of you, then, Chancellor Metternich,
Straightway to beg the Emperor my father
That he fulfil his duty to the realm,
And quite subordinate thereto all thought
Of how ~~this may affect me personally~~ it personally impinge on me.

A slight noise as of something falling is heard in the room. They glance ~~round~~ momentarily, & see that a small enamel portrait of Marie Antoinette, which was standing on a console-table, has slipped down on its face.

Spirit of the Years.

What mischief's this? The Will must have Its way.

Spirit Sinister

Perhaps Earth shivered at the lady's say?

Shade of the Earth

I own thereto. When France & Austria wed

My echoes are men's groans, my dews are red;
~~And~~ So I have reason for a passing dread.

Metternich.

Right nobly phrased, Archduchess; wisely, too.
I will acquaint your sire the Emperor
With these your views. He waits them anxiously.
(Going)

Maria Louisa

Let me go first. It much confuses me
To think — But I would fain let thinking be!
She goes out.

Enter Francis by another door.

Metternich.

I was about to seek your Majesty.
The good Archduchess luminously holds
That in this weighty question you regard
The Empire. Best for it is best for her.

Francis (moved)

My daughter's views thereon do not surprize me.
She is too staunch to pit a private whim
Against the fortunes of a commonwealth.
During your speech with her I have taken thought
To shape decision ~~wisely~~ sagely. An assent

Would yield the Empire many years of peace,
And leave me scope to heal those still green sores
Which linger from our late unhappy moils.
Therefore, my daughter not being disinclined,
I know no basis for a negative.
Send, then, a courier ~~prop~~ prompt to Paris: say
The offer made for the Archduchess' hand
I do accept — with this defined reserve;
That no condition, treaty, bond, attach
To such alliance, save the tie itself.
There are some sacrifices whose grave rites
No bargain must contaminate. This is one —
This personal gift of a beloved child!

M'Lean
H Slatter

Metternich (leaving)
I'll see to it this hour, your majesty,
And cast the words in keeping with your wish.
(To himself as he goes)
Decently done! ..... He slipped out "sacrifice";
And scarce could hide his heartache for his girl.
Well ached it! — But when these things have to be
It is as well to breast them stoically.

Exit Metternich.

The clouds draw over.

Scene IV

London. A club in St James's Street.

A winter midnight. Two members are conversing by the fire, & others are seen lolling in the background, some of them snoring.

First Member.

(I learn from a private letter) that It was carried out in the Emperor's Cabinet at the Tuilleries — just off the throne-room, where they all assembled in the evening — Boney, & the wife (in pure white muslin from head to foot, they say), the Kings & Queens of Holland, Westphalia, & Naples, the Princess Pauline, & one or two more; the officials present being Cambacérès the Chancellor, & Count Regnaud. Quite a small party. It was over in a few minutes — short & sweet, like a donkey's gallop.

Second member.

Anything but sweet for her. How did she stand it?

First member.

Serenely, I believe, while the Emperor was making his speech renouncing her; but when it came to her turn to say she renounced him she began sobbing mightily, & was so completely choked up that she couldn't get out a word.

Second member.

Poor old dame! I pity her by God; though she had a rattling good time while it lasted.

First member.

They say he was a bit upset, too, at sight of her tears. But I dare vow that was put on. Fancy Boney caring a curse what a woman feels. She had learnt her speech by heart, but that did not help her: Regnaud had to finish it for her, the ditch that overturned her being where she was made to say that she no longer preserved any hope of having children, & that she was pleased to show her attachment by enabling him to obtain them by another woman. She was led off fainting. A turning of the tables, considering how madly jealous she used to make him by her flirtations!

Enter a Third member.

Second member.

How is the debate going? Still braying the Government in a mortar?

Third member.

They are. Though one thing everybody admits: young Peel has made a wonderful first speech in seconding the address. There has been nothing like it since Pitt. He spoke rousingly of Austria's misfortunes — went on about Spain, of course, showing that we must still go on supporting her, winding up with a brilliant peroration about — what were the words — "the fiery glance of freedom which flashed incessantly from the indignant eyes of the British soldier!" — Oh, well: it was all learnt beforehand, of course.

Second member.

I wish I had gone down. But the wind soon blew the other way?

Third member.

Then Gower ~~proposed~~ rapped out his amendment. That was good, too, by God.

Second member.

Well, the war must go on. And that being the general conviction this censure & that censure are only so many blank cartridges.

Third member.

Blank. Damn me, were they! Gower's was a palpable hit when he said that Parliament had placed unheard of resources in the hands of Ministers last year, to make this year's results to the country worse than if they had been afforded no resources at all. Every single enterprize of theirs had been a beggarly failure.

Second member.

Anybody could have said it, come to that.

Third member

Yes, because it is so true. However, when he began to lay on with such rhetoric as "the treasures of the nation lavished in wasteful thoughtlessness", "thousands of our troops sacrificed wantonly in the pestilential swamps of Walcheren", & gave the details we know so well, Ministers wriggled a good one, though 'twas no news to 'em. Castlereagh kept on starting forward as if he were going to jump up & interrupt, taking the strictures entirely as a personal affront.

Enter Fourth member.

Several members.

Who's speaking now?

Fourth member.

I don't know. I have heard of nobody later than Ward.

Second member.

The fact is that, as Whitbread said to me to-day, the materials for condemnation are so prodigious that we can scarce marshal them into argument. We are just able to pour 'em out one upon t'other.

225/91 1. Third member.

Ward said with the blandest air in the world: "Censure? Do His Majesty's Ministers expect censure? Not a bit. They are going about asking in tremulous tones if anybody has heard when their impeachment is going to begin."

Several members.

Haw-haw-haw!

Third member

Then he made another point. After enumerating our frightful failures — Spain, Walcheren, & the rest — he said: "But Ministers have not failed in everything. No; in one thing they have been strikingly successful. They have been successful in their attack upon Copenhagen — because it was directed against an ally." Mighty fine, wasn't it?

Second member

How did Castlereagh stomach that?

Third member.

He replies then. Donning his air of injured innocence he proved the honesty of his intentions — no doubt truly enough. But when he came to Walcheren nothing could be done. The case was hopeless, & he knew it, & foundered. However, at the division, when he saw what a majority was going out on his side he was as frisky as a child. Canning's speech was grave, with bits of shiny ornament stuck on — like the brass nails on a coffin, Sheridan says.

Fifth & sixth members stagger in, arm in arm.

Fifth member.

The 'vision is — jority of ninety-six againsht — Gov'ment — I mean — againsht us. Which is it — hey? (to his companion)

Sixth member.

Damn majority of — damn ninety six — against damn amendment!

(They sink down on a sofa.)

Second member.

Gad, I didn't expect the figure would have been quite so high!

Third member.

The one conviction is that the war in the Peninsula is to go on, & as we are all agreed upon that, what the hell does it matter what their majority is?

Enter Sheridan. They all turn inquiringly.

Sheridan.

Have ye heard the latest?

Second member.

Ninetysix against us.

Sheridan.

O no – that's ancient history. I'd forgot it.

Third member.

A revolution, because ministers are not impeached & hanged?

Sheridan.

That's in contemplation, when we've got their confessions. But what I meant was from over the water – it is a deuced sight more serious to us than a debate & division that are only like the Liturgy on a Sunday – known beforehand to all the congregation. Why, Bonaparte is going to marry Austria forthwith – the Emperor's daughter Maria Louisa.

Third member.

The Lord look down! Our late respected crony Austria! Why, in this very night's debate they have been talking about the laudable principles we have been acting upon in affording assistance to the Emperor Francis in his struggle against the violence & ambition of France!

Second member.

Boney safe on that side, what may not befall!

Third member.

We had better make it up with him, & shake hands all round.

Second member.

Shake heads seems most natural in the case. O House of Hapsburg, how hast thou fallen!

Enter Whitbread, Lord Hutchinson, Lord George Cavendish, George Ponsonby, Windham, Lord Grey, Baring, Elliot, & other members, some ~~of them~~ drunk. The conversation becomes animated & noisy; several move off to the card-room, & the Scene closes.

H Slatter
Baxter

Scene V.

The old west highway out of Vienna.

The spot is where the road passes under the slopes of the Wiener Wald, with its beautiful forest scenery.

Dumb Show.

A procession of enormous length, composed of eighty carriages – many of them drawn by six horses & one by eight — & escorted by detachments of cuirassiers, yeomanry, & other cavalry, is quickening its speed along the highway from the city.

The six-horse carriages contain a multitude of court officials, ladies of the court, & other Austrian nobility. The eight-horse coach contains a rosy, blue eyed girl of eighteen, with full red lips, round figure, & pale auburn hair. She is Maria Louisa, & her eyes are red from recent weeping. The Countess de Lazansky, Grand Mistress of the Household in the carriage with her, & the other

ladies of the Palace behind, have a pale, proud, yet resigned look, as if conscious that upon their sex had been laid the burden of paying for the peace with France. They have been played out of Vienna with French marches, & the incident has helped on their sadness.

The observer's vision being still bent on this train of vehicles & cavalry, the point of sight is withdrawn high into the air, till the huge procession on the brown road looks no more than a file of ants crawling along a strip of garden-matting. The spacious terrestrial outlook now gained shows this to be the great road across Europe from Vienna to Munich, & from Munich westerly to France.

The puny concatenation of specks being exclusively watched, the surface of the earth seems to move along in an opposite direction, & in infinite variety of hill, dale, woodland, & champaign. Bridges are crossed, ascents are climbed, plains are galloped over, & towns are reached, among them Saint Pölten, where night falls.

Morning shines, & the royal crawl is resumed, & continued through Linz, where the Danube is re-approached, & the girl looks pleased to see her own dear Donau still. Presently the tower of Braunau appears, where the animated dots pause for formalities, this being the frontier; & Maria Louisa becomes Marie Louise & a Frenchwoman, in the charge of French officials.

After many breaks & halts, during which heavy rains spread their gauzes over the scene, the roofs & houses of Munich disclose themselves, like to the tesserae of an irregular mosaic. A long stop is made here.

The tedious advance continues. Vine-circled Stuttgart, flat Carlsruhe, the winding Rhine, storky Strassburg, pass in panorama beneath us as the procession is followed. With Nancy & Bar-le-Duc sliding along, the scenes begin to assume a French character, & soon we perceive Châlons & ancient Rheims. The last day of the journey has ~~arrived~~ dawned. Our vision flits ahead of the cortège to Courcelles, a little ~~before Soissons~~ place which must be passed through before Soissons is reached. Here the point of sight descends to earth, & the dumb show ends.

Scene VI

Courcelles.

It is now seen to be a quiet, roadside village with a humble church in its midst, opposite to which stands an inn, the highway passing between them. Rain is still falling heavily. Not a soul is visible anywhere.

Enter from the west a plain, lonely carriage, travelling in a direction to meet the file of coaches that we have watched. It stops near the inn, & two men muffled in cloaks alight by the door away from the hostel & towards the church, as if they wished to avoid observation. Their faces are those of Napoleon & Murat his brother-in-law. Crossing the road through the mud & rain they stand in the church-porch, & watch the descending drifts.

Napoleon (stamping an impatient tattoo)

One gets more chilly in a wet March than in a dry, however cold,

the devil if he don't! What time do you make it now. That clock doesn't go.

Murat (drily, looking at his watch)

Yes it does; & it is right. If it were to go as fast as your wishes it would be awkward for the rest of the world.

Napoléon. (chuckling good-humouredly)

How we have dished the Soisson's folk, with their pavilions, & purple-&-gold hangings for bride & bridegroom to meet in, & stately ceremonial to match, & their thousands looking on! Here we are where there's nobody. Ha-ha!

Murat.

But why should they be dished, sire? The pavilions & ceremonies were by your own orders.

Napoléon.

Well, as the time got nearer I couldn't stand the idea of dawdling about there.

Murat

The Soissons people will be in a ~~devil~~ dence of a taking at being made such fools of!

Napoléon.

So let 'em. I'll make it up with them somehow. — She can't be far off now, if we have timed her rightly. (He peers out into the rain & listens.)

Murat.

I don't quite see how you are going to manage when she does come.

Do we go before her towards Soissons when you have greeted her here; or follow in her rear? Or what do we do?

Napoléon

Heavens, I know no more than you. Trust to the moment & see what happens. (A silence) Hark – here she comes! Good little girl; up to time!

The distant squashing in the mud of a multitude of hoofs & wheels is succeeded by the appearance of outriders, & carriages, horses, & horsemen, splashed with the various coloured clays of the districts traversed. The vehicles slow down to the inn. Napoléon's face fires up, & followed by Murat he rushes into the rain towards the coach that is drawn by eight horses, containing the blue-eyed girl. He holds off his hat at the carriage-window.

Marie Louise (shrinking back inside)

Ah, Heaven! Two highwaymen are upon us!

The Equerry d'Audenarde (simultaneously)

The Emperor!

The steps of the coach are hastily lowered, Napoléon, dripping, jumps in & embraces her. The startled Archduchess, with much blushing & confusion, recognizes him.

Marie Louise (spasmodically as she recovers herself)

You are so much better looking than your portraits, that I hardly knew you! I expected you at Soissons. We are not at Soissons yet?

Napoléon.

No, my dearest spouse, but we are together. (Calling out to the equerry) Drive through Soissons — pass the pavilion of reception without stopping, & don't halt till we reach Compiègne.

He sits down in the coach & is shut in, Murat laughing silently at the scene. Exeunt carriages & riders towards Soissons.

Chorus of Ironic Spirits (aerial music)

First 'twas a finished coquette,
And now 'tis a raw ingénue! —
Blonde instead of brunette,
And old wife doffed for a new!
She'll bring him a baby
As quickly as maybe,
And that's what he wants her to do,
Hoo-hoo!
And that's what he wants her to do!

Spirit of the Years.

What lewd noise mouth those wry-formed phantoms there?

Spirits Ironic.

A holy nuptial hymn, dear Father Kronos:
'Twas that we sang, no more!

The rain thickens to a mist & obscures the scene.

Baxter
Dracon

Scene VII

Petersburg. The Palace of the Empress-mother.

One of the private apartments is disclosed, in which the Empress-mother & Alexander are seated.

Empress-mother.

So Austrian ~~line~~ blood he honours & selects
To be his bride & bulwark — not our own.
Thus are you coolly shelved!

Alexander.

Me, mother dear?

You, faith, if I may say it dutifully!
Had all been left to me, some time ere now
He would have wedded Kate.

Empress-mother.

How so, my son?

Catharine was plighted, & it could not be.

Alexander.

Rather you swiftly pledged & married her,
To let Napoléon have no chance that way.
But Anne remained.

Empress-mother.

How Anne! — so young a girl!

Sane Nature would have cried indecency
At such a troth.

<u>Alexander.</u>

Time would have tinkered that,
And he was well-disposed to wait awhile.
But the one test he had no temper for
Was the apparent slight of unresponse
Accorded his impatient overtures
By our suspensive poise of policy.

<u>Empress-mother.</u>

~~[illegible]~~ A backward answer is our country's card —
The special ~~mark~~ style & ~~[illegible]~~ mode of Muscovy.
We have grown great upon it, my dear son,
And may such practice rule our centuries through!
The necks of those who rate themselves our peers
Are cured of stiffness by its potency.

<u>Alexander.</u>

The principle in this case, anyhow,
Is shattered by the facts; since none can doubt
Your policy was counted an affront,
And drove my long ally to Austria's arms,
With what result to us must yet be seen.

<u>Empress-mother</u>

May Austria win much joy of the alliance!

Marrying Napoléon is a midnight leap
For any court in Europe, credit me,
If ever such there were! What he may carve
Upon the coming years, what murderous bolt
Hurl at the rocking Constitutions round,
Upon what ledges he may land himself,
How his career will close, no sage can say.
One thing we may assume as certainty —
That he will never rest in quiet rule.

Alexander

Well — possibly! ..... And maybe all is best
That he engrafts his lineage not on us. —
But, honestly, Napoléon none the less
Has been my friend, & I regret the dream
And fleeting fancy of a closer tie!

Empress-mother.

Ay; your regrets are sentimental ever.
That he'll be writ no son-in-law of mine
Is no regret to me! But an affront
There is, no less, in his evasion o'it,
Wherein the bourgeois quality of him
Veraciously peeps out. I would be sworn
He set his minions parleying with the twain —
Yourself & Francis — simultaneously.
Else no betrothal could have speeded so.

Alexander.

Despite the hazard of offence to one?

Empress-mother.

More than the hazard; the necessity.

Alexander.

There's no offence to me.

Empress-mother.

There should be, then.
I am a Romanoff by marriage merely,
But I do feel a rare belittlement
And loud laconic browbeating herein!

Alexander.

No, mother, no! I am the Tsar – not you,
And I am only piqued in moderateness.
Marriage with France was near my heart – I own it –
What then? It has been otherwise ordained.

A silence.

Empress-mother.

Here comes dear Anne. Speak not of it before her.

Enter the Grand-duchess, a girl of sixteen.

Anne.

Alas, the news is that poor Prussia's queen,
Spirited Queen Louisa, once so fair,
Is slowly dying, mother. Did you know?

Alexander (betraying emotion)

Ah! — such I dreaded from the earlier news.
Poor soul — her heart was slain some time ago.

Anne.

What do you mean by that, my brother dear?

Empress-mother.

He means, my child, that he as usual spends
Much sentiment upon the foreign fair,
And hence leaves little for his folk at home.

Alexander.

I mean, Anne, that her country's overthrow
Let death into her heart. The Tilsit days
Taught me to know her well, & honour her.
She was a lovely woman even then!.....
Strangely, the present English Prince of Wales
Was wished to husband her. Had wishes won,
They might have varied Europe's history.

Anne.

Napoléon, I have heard, admired her once;
How he must grieve that soon she'll be no more!

Empress-mother.

Napoléon & your brother loved her both.

(Alexander shows embarrassment)

But whatsoever grief be Alexander's,

His will be none who feels but for himself.

Anne.

O mother, how can you mistake him so!
He worships her who is to be his wife
The fair Archduchess Marie.

Empress-mother.

Simple child,
As yet he has never seen her, or but barely.
That is a tactic suit, with love to match.

Alexander (with ~~suppressed~~ vainly veiled tenderness)

High-souled Louisa; — when shall I forget
~~That~~ ~~Those~~ Tilsit ~~meetings~~ ~~scenes~~ gatherings in the long-sunned June ~~days~~!....
Napoléon's gallantries deceived her quite,
Who fondly felt her pleas for Magdeburg
Had won him to its cause; the while, ~~in truth~~ alas,
His cynic sense but posed in cruel play!

Empress-mother.

Bitterly mourned she her civilities
When time disclosed the truth, that she had choked
Her indignation at his former slights
And slanderous sayings for a baseless hope,
And wrought not a tittle for her country's gain.
I marvel why you mourn a ~~hindered~~ frustrate tie ~~kin~~
With one whose wiles could wring a woman so!

Alexander (uneasily)

I marvel also, when I think of it!

Empress-mother.

Don't listen to us longer, dearest Anne.

(Exit Anne

— You will uphold my judging by & by
That as a suitor we are well quit of him,
And that blind Austria will rue the hour
Wherein she plucks for him her fairest flower.

The scene closes.

Mason
Kerloh

Scene VIII

Paris. The Grand Gallery of the Louvre & the Salon-Carré adjoining.

The view is up the middle of the gallery, which is now a spectacle of much magnificence. Backed by the large paintings on the walls are double rows on each side of brightly dressed ladies, the pick of Imperial society, to the number of four thousand, one thousand in each row; & behind these standing up are two rows on each side of men of privilege & fashion. Officers of the Imperial Guard are dotted about as marshals.

Temporary barriers form a wide passage up the midst, leading

to the Salon-Carré, which is seen through the opening to be fitted up as a chapel, with a gorgeous altar, tall candles, & cross. In front of the altar is a platform with a canopy over it. On the platform are two gilt chairs & a prie-dieu.

The expectant assembly does not continuously remain in the seats, but promenades & talks, the voices at times rising to a din amid the strains of the orchestra, conducted by the Emperor's Director of Music. Refreshments in profusion are handed round, & the whole gallery resolves itself into a gigantic café of persons of distinction under the Empire.

Spirit Sinister.

All day have they been waiting for their galanty-show, & now the hour of performance is on the strike. It may be seasonable to muse on the sixteenth Louis & the bride's great-aunt, as the nearing procession is, I see, appositely crossing the track of the tumbril which was the last coach of that respected lady..... It is now passing over the site of the scaffold on which she lost her head.... Now it will soon be here.

Suddenly the Heralds enter the Gallery at the end towards the Tuileries, the spectators ranging themselves in their places. In a moment the wedding procession of the Emperor & Empress becomes visible. The civil marriage having already been performed Napoléon & Marie Louise advance together along the vacant pathway towards the Salon-Carré followed by the long suite of illustrious personages, & acclamations burst from all parts of the Grand Gallery.

Spirit of the Pities.

Whose are those forms that pair in pompous train
Behind the couple of half-wedded ones,
With faces showing sense of an adventure
Which may close well, or not so?

Recording Angel (reciting)

First there walks
The Emperor's brother Louis, Holland's king;
Then Jerome of Westphalia with his spouse;
The mother-queen, & Julie Queen of Spain,
The Prince Borghèse & the Princess Pauline,
Beauharnais the Vice-king of Italy;
And Murat King of Naples, with their Queens;
Baden's Grand-duke, Arch-chancellor Cambacérès,
Berthier, Lebrun, & (not least) Talleyrand.
Then the Grand Marshal & the Chamberlain,
The Lords-in-Waiting, the Grand Equerry,
With waiting-ladies, women of the Chamber,
And others called by office, rank, or fame.

Spirit of Rumour.

New, many, to Imperial dignities;
Which, won by character & quality
In those who now enjoy them, will become
The birthright of their sons in aftertime.

Spirit of the Years.

It fits thee not to augur, quick-eared Shade.
Ephemeral at the best ~~may~~ all honours be,
These even more ephemeral than their kind,
So random-fashioned, swift, perturbable!

~~Spirit of the Pities.~~

~~Their [illegible]~~
~~Why therefore [illegible] thy laughingstocks,~~
~~Rather than those thou'lt honour in their time!~~

~~Spirit of the Years.~~

~~All men are that — if Time a laugher be.~~

Spirit of the Pities.

Napoléon looks content — nay, shines with joy.

Spirit of the Years.

Yet see it pass, as by a conjuror's wand.

Thereupon Napoléon's face blackens as if the shadow of a winter cloud had fallen upon it. Resentful & threatening he stops the procession & looks up & down the benches.

Spirit Sinister.

This is sound artistry of the Immanent Will. It relieves the monotony of so much good-humour.

Napoléon (to the Chapel-master in a voice so loud that he is heard throughout the Gallery)

Where are the Cardinals? And why not here?

Abbé de Pradt (trembling)

Many are present here, your Majesty;
But some are feebled by infirmities
Too common to their age, & cannot come.

Napoléon.

Tell me no nonsense! Half absent themselves
Because they *will* not come. The factious fools!
Well, be it so. But they shall flinch for it!

Marie Louise looks frightened. The procession moves on.

Spirit of the Pities.

I seem to see the thin & headless ghost
Of the yet earlier Austrian, ++ here, too, queen, ++
Walking beside the bride, with frail attempts
To pluck her by the arm!

Spirit of the Years.

Nay, think not so.
We are the only phantoms now ~~afoot~~ abroad
On this mud-moulded ball. Through sixteen years
She has decayed in a back-garden yonder, ++
Dust all the showance earth retains of her, ++
Senseless to hustlings in her former house,
And to all count of crowns & bridalry —
Even to her Austrian blood. No: what thou seest
Springs of thy quavering fancy, stirred to dreams
By yon tart phantom's phrase.

Marie Louise (sadly to Napoléon)

I know not why,
I love not this day's doings half so well
As our quaint meeting-time at Compiègne.
A clammy air creeps round me, as from vaults
Peopled with looming spectres, chilling me
And angering you withal.

Napoléon.

O, it is nought
To trouble you: merely, my cherished one,
Those devils of Italian Cardinals. —
Now I'll be bright as ever — you must, too.

Marie Louise.

I'll try!

Reaching the entrance to the Salon-Carré amid strains of music the Emperor & Empress are received & incensed by the Cardinal Grand Almoners. They take their seats under the canopy, the train of notabilities in the rear, the persons in waiting stopping behind the Imperial chairs.

The ceremony of the religious marriage now begins. The choir intones a hymn, the Emperor & Empress go to the altar, remove their gloves, & make their vows.

Spirit Ironic

The English Church should return thanks for this wedding, seeing how it will purge of coarseness the picture-sheets of that artistic nation,

which will hardly be able to caricature the new wife as it did poor plebeian Joséphine. No snob can sneer at a woman of such a divinely ~~sight~~ dry & ~~mouldy~~ crusted line as the Hapsburgs!

Mass is next celebrated, after which the Te Deum is chanted in ~~notes~~ harmonies that whirl round the walls of the Salon-Carré & ~~sweep~~ quiver down the Long Gallery. The procession then re-forms & returns, amid the flutterings & applause of the dense assembly. But Napoléon's face has not lost the sombre expression which settled on it. The pair & their train pass out by the west door, & the congregation disperses in the other direction, the cloud-curtain closing over the scene as they disappear.

Act Sixth.

Scene I.

The Lines of Torrès Védras

A bird's-eye perspective is revealed of the peninsular tract of Portuguese territory lying between the shining pool of the Tagus on the east, & the white-frilled Atlantic swaying rhythmically on the west. As thus beheld the tract features itself somewhat like a vair-shaped shield, the upper edge from the dexter to the sinister chief being the lines of Torrès Védras, stretching across from the mouth of the Zezambre on the left to Alhandra on the right, & the south or base point being Fort S. Julian. The roofs of Lisbon appear at the sinister base, & in a corresponding spot on the opposite side Cape Roca.

It is perceived in a moment that the northern verge of this ~~sight~~ (nearly) [coast-] hemmed region is the only one through which access can be gained to it by land, & a close scrutiny of the boundary there reveals that means are being adopted to effectually prevent such access.

From east to west along it runs a chain of defences, dotted at intervals by dozens of circular & square redoubts, either made or in the making, two of the latter being of enormous size. Between them stretch unclimbable escarpments, stone walls, & other breastworks, & in front of all a double line of abattis, formed of the limbs of trees.

Within the outer line of defence is a second, constructed on the same principle, its course being bent to take advantage of natural features. This second rampart is finished, & appears to be impregnable.

The third defence is far off southward, ~~hemming~~ girdling the very base point of the shield-shaped tract of country; & is not more than a twelfth of the length of the others. It is a continuous entrenchment of ditches & ramparts, & its object—that of covering a forced embarkation—is rendered apparent by some rocking English transports off the shore hard by.

Dumb Show.

Innumerable human figures are busying themselves like cheese-mites all along the northernmost frontage, undercutting easy slopes into steep ones, digging ditches, piling stones, felling trees, dragging them, & interlacing them along the front as required.

On the second breastwork, which is completed, only a few figures move.

On the third breastwork, which is fully manned & equipped, sentinels creep backwards & forwards noiselessly.

As time passes three reddish-grey streams of marching men loom out to the north, advancing southward along three roads towards three ~~separated~~ diverse points in the first defence. These form the English army, ~~who~~ entering the lines for shelter. Looked down upon, their motion seems peristaltic & vermicular, like that of three caterpillars. The division on the left is under Picton, in

the centre under Leith & Cole, & on the extreme right, by Alhandra, under Hill. Beside one of the roads two or three of the soldiers are dangling from a tree by the neck, for plundering. Dumb show ends, & the point of view sinks to the earth.

Scene II.

The Same. Outside the Lines.

The winter day has dimmed to a gloomy & stormful evening, & the road outside the first line of Defence forms the foreground of the stage.

Enter in the dusk from the hills to the north of the entrenchments, near Calandrix, a group of horsemen, which includes Masséna, in command of the French forces, Foy, Loison, & other officers of his staff.

They ride forward in the twilight & tempest, & reconnoitre, till they see against the sky the ramparts blocking the road they pursue. They halt silently. Masséna, puzzled, endeavours with his glass to make out the obstacle.

Masséna

Something stands here to ~~perplex~~ peril our advance,
Or even prevent it.

Foy.

These are the English lines—
Their outer horns & tusks—of which I spoke,

Constructed by Lord Wellington of late
To keep his foothold firm in Portugal.

Masséna.

Thrusts he his burly bossed disfigurements
So far to north as this? I had pictured me
They lay much nearer Lisbon. Little wonder
Lord Wellington rode placid at Busaco
With this behind his back! Well, it is hard
But that we turn them somewhere, I assume?
They scarce can close up every southward gap
Between the Tagus & the Atlantic Sea.

Foy.

I hold they can, & do; although, no doubt,
By searching we shall spy some raggedness
Which customed skill may force.

Masséna

Plain 'tis, no less,
We may heap corpses vainly hereabout,
And crack good bones in waste. By human power
This passes mounting! What say you's behind?

Loison.

Another line exactly like the first,
But more matured. Behind its back a third.

Masséna.

How long have these prim ponderosities
Been rearing up their foreheads to the moon?

Loison.

Some months in all. I know not quite how long.
They are Lord Wellington's select device,
And like him heavy, slow, laborious, sure.

Masséna.

May he enjoy their sureness. He deserves to.
I had no inkling of such barriers here.
A good road runs along their front, it seems,
Which offers us advantage...... What a night!

The tempest cries dismally about the earthworks above them as the reconnoitrers linger in the slight shelter the lower ground affords. They are about to turn back.

Enter from the cross-road to the right Junot & some more officers. They come up at a signal that the others are those they lately parted from.

Junot.

We have ridden along as far as Calandrix,
Favoured therein by this disordered night,
Which tongues its language to the disguise of ours;
And find amid the vale an open route,
That, well manoeuvred, may be practicable.

Masséna.

I'll look at it, now while the weather aids.
If it may serve our end when all's prepared
So good. If not, some other to the west.

Exeunt Masséna, Junot, Loison, Foy, & the rest by the paved crossway to the right.

The wind continues to prevail as the spot is left desolate. The darkness increases, rain descends more heavily, & the scene is blotted out.

Scene III.

Paris. The Tuileries.

The anteroom to the Empress's bedchamber, in which are discovered Napoléon, the Duchess of Montebello & other Ladies-in-Waiting, Corvisart the First Physician, & the Second Physician Bourdier.

The Emperor walks up & down, throws himself on a sofa, or stands at the window. A cry of anguish comes occasionally from within.

Napoléon (opening the door & speaking into the bedchamber)
How now, Dubois?

Voice of Dubois the accoucheur (nervously)
Less well, sire, than I hoped;
I fear no skill can save them both.

Napoleon (agitated)
Good God!

Corvisart goes into the bedroom. Enter Dubois.

Dubois (with hesitation)

Which life is to be saved? The Empress, sire,
Lies in great jeopardy. I have not known
In my long years of many-featured practice
An instance in a thousand fall out so.

Napoléon.

Then save the mother, pray! Think but of her:
It is her privilege, & my command.—
Don't lose your head, Dubois, at this tense time:
Your furthest skill can work but what it may.
Fancy that you are merely standing by
A shop-wife's couch, say, in the Rue Saint Denis:
Show the aplomb & phlegm that you would show
Did such a bed receive your ministry.

Exit Dubois.

Voice of Marie Louise (within)

O pray, pray don't! Those iron things terrify me! Why should I be tortured even if I am but a means to an end! Let me die! It was cruel of him to bring this upon me!

Exit Napoléon impatiently to the bedroom.

Voice of Madame de Montesquiou (within)

Keep up your spirits, Madame! I have been through it myself, & I assure you there is no danger to you. It is going on all

right, & I am holding you.

Voice of Napoléon (within)

Heaven above! Why did you not keep those cursed sugar-tongs out of her sight! How is she going to get through it if you frighten her like this!

Voice of Dubois (within)

If you will pardon me, your Majesty,
I must implore you not to interfere!
I will not answer for the consequence
If, sire, you do! Better for her sake far
Would you withdraw. The sight of your concern
But agitates & weakens her endurance.
I will inform you all, & call you back
If things should worsen here.

Re-enter Napoléon from the bedchamber. He half shuts the door & remains close to it listening, pale & nervous.

Bourdier

I ask you, sire,
To harass yourself less with this event,
Which may amend anon: I much regret
The honoured mother of your Majesty,
And sister too, should both have left ere now,
Whose solace would have bridged these anxious hours.

Napoléon (absently)

As we were not expecting it so soon
I begged them to sit up no longer here.....
She ought to get along; she has help enough!
There are a good half-dozen of them within.
There's Madame Blaise the nurse, & two besides,
Madame de Montesquiou & Madame Ballant —

Dubois (speaking through the doorway)

There is no question, sire, of which to save.
The child is dead; the while her Majesty
Is getting through it well.

Napoléon

Praise Heaven for that.
I will not grieve o'ermuch about the child....
Never shall she go through this strain again
To lay down a dynastic line for me!

✓ Duchess of Montebello (aside to second lady)

257/8 He only says that now. In cold blood it would be far otherwise.
That's how men are.

Voice of Madame Blaise (within)

Doctor, the ~~baby lives~~ child's alive!

(The cry of an infant is heard)

Voice of Dubois (calling from within)

Sire, both are saved!

Napoléon rushes into the chamber & is heard kissing Marie Louise.

Voice of Madame Blaise (within)

A vigorous boy, your Imperial Majesty. The brandy & hot napkins brought him to.

Duchess of Montebello.

It is as I expected. A healthy young woman of her breed had every chance of doing well despite the doctors.

An interval.

Napoléon (re-entering radiantly)

We have achieved a healthy heir, my friends.
And in the feat the Empress was most brave,
Although she suffered much — so much, indeed,
That I would sooner father no more sons
Than have her tender figure undergo
Another wrenching of such magnitude.

He walks to the window, pulls aside the curtains, & looks out. It is a joyful spring morning. The Tuileries' gardens are thronged with an immense crowd, kept at a little distance off the Palace by a cord. The windows of the neighbouring houses are full of gazers, & the streets are thronged with halting carriages, their inmates awaiting the event.

Spirit of the Years (whispering to Napoléon)

At this high hour there dwells a woman near,
Ay, here in Paris, with her child & thine,

Who might have played this part less perilously
To thee & to thy contemplated line!

Napoléon (soliloquizing)

Strange that just now there flashes on my soul
That little one I loved in Warsaw days,
Marie Walewska, & my boy by her!—
She was shown faithless by a foul intrigue
Till fate sealed up her opportunity.....
But what's one woman's fortune more or less
Beside the schemes of kings!—Ah, there's the news!

A gun is heard from the Invalides.

Crowd (excitedly)

One!

Another report of the gun, & another, succeed.

Two! Three! Four!

The firing & counting proceed to twentyone, when there is great suspense. The gun fires again, & the excitement is doubled.

Twentytwo! A boy!

The remainder of the counting up to a hundred-&-one is drowned in huzzas. Bells begin ringing, & from the Champs de Mars a balloon ascends, from which the tidings are scattered in handbills as it floats away across France.

Enter the President of the Senate, Cambacérès, Berthier, Lebrun, & other officers of state. Napoléon turns from the window.

Cambacérès

Unstinted gratulations & good-will
We bring to your Imperial Majesty,
While still resounds the superflux of joy
With which your people welcome this live star
Upon the horizon of our history.

President of Senate.

All blessings at their goodliest will grace
The advent of this new Messiah, sire,
Of fairer prospects than the former one,
Whose coming at so apt an hour endues
The widening glory of your high exploits
With permanence, & flings the dimness far
That cloaked the future of our chronicle!

Napoléon.

My thanks; though, gentlemen, upon my soul
You might have drawn the line at the Messiah.
But I excuse you. — Yes, the boy has come;
He took some coaxing, but he's here at last. —
And what news brings the morning from without?
I know of none but this the Empress' feat
Trumps to the world from the adjoining room.

~~Mr Ahley~~ A. Monroey

President of Senate.

Nothing in Europe, sire, that can compare
In magnitude therewith to more effect
Than with an eagle some frail finch or wren.
To wit: the ban on English trade prevailing
Subjects our merchant-houses to such strain
That many of the best see bankruptcy
Like a grim ghost ahead. Next week, they say –
In secret here, six of the largest close.

Napoléon.

It shall not be! Our burst of natal joy
Must not be sullied by so mean a ~~trap~~ thing:
Aid shall be rendered. Much as we may suffer,
England must suffer more, & I am content.
What has come in from Spain & Portugal?

Berthier.

Vaguely voiced rumours, sire, but nothing more,
Which travel ~~continents, like~~ countries quick as earthquake-thrills,
No mortal knowing how.

Napoléon.

Of Masséna?

Berthier.

He still retreats for prudence' sake, it seems,
Before Lord Wellington. ~~whose mighty forts~~ Dispatches soon

~~At Védras stand intact. Dispatches soon~~
Must reach your Majesty, explaining all.

NAPOLÉON.

Ever retreating! Why declines he so
From all his olden prowess? Why, again,
Did he give battle at Busaco lately,
When Lisbon could be marched on without strain?
Why has he dallied by the Tagus bank
And shunned the obvious course? I gave him Ney,
Soult, & Junot, & eighty thousand men,
And he does nothing. Really it might seem
As though we meant to let this Wellington
Be even with us there!

BERTHIER

His mighty forts
At Torrès Védras hamper Masséna,
And quite preclude advance.

NAPOLÉON.

O well – no matter:
Why should I linger on these haps of war
Now that I have a son!

Exeunt Napoléon by one door & by another the President of the Senate, Cambacérès, Lebrun, Berthiér, & officials.

Chorus of Ironic Spirits (aerial music)

The Will Itself is slave to him,
And holds it blissful to obey! —
He said, "Go to; it is my whim

To bed a bride without delay,
Who shall unite my dull new name
With one that shone in Caesar's day.

She must conceive — you hear my claim? —
And bear a son — no daughter, mind —
Who shall hand on my form & fame

To future times as I have designed;
And at the birth throughout the land
Must cannon roar & alphorns wind."

The Will ~~was waked by his~~ grew conscious at command,
And ordered issue as he planned.

The interior of the Palace is ~~hid~~ veiled.

Scene IV.

Spain. Albuera

The dawn of a mid-May day shows the village of Albuera with the country around it, as viewed from the summit of a line of hills on which the English & their allies are ranged under Beresford. The landscape swept by the eye includes to the right foreground a hill

loftier than any, & somewhat detached from the range. The green slopes behind & around this hill are untrodden — though in a few hours to be the sanguinary scene of the most murderous struggle of the whole war.

The village itself lies to the left foreground, with its stream flowing behind it. A creeping brook at the bottom of the heights joins the stream by the village. Behind the heights some of the French forces are visible. Away behind these stretches a great wood several miles in area, out of which the Albuera stream emerges, & behind the furthest verge of the wood the morning sky lightens momently. The birds in the wood, unaware that this day is to be different from every other day there known, are heard singing their overtures with their usual serenity.

Dumb show

As objects grow more distinct it can be perceived that some strategic dispositions of the night are being completed by the French forces, which the evening before lay in the woodland to the front of the English army. They have emerged during the darkness & large selections of them — infantry, cuirassiers, & artillery — have crept round to Beresford's right without his suspecting the movement, where they lie hidden by the great hill aforesaid, though not more than half a mile from his right wing.

Spirit of the Years.

A hot ado goes forward here to-day,
If I may read the Immanent Intent
From signs & tokens blent
With weird unrest along the firmament

Of causal coils in passionate display.
— Look narrowly, & what you witness say.

Spirit of the Pities

I see red smears upon the ~~pallid~~ sickly dawn,
And seeming drops of gore. On earth below
Are men — unnatured & mechanic-drawn —
Mixt nationalities in row & row,
Wheeling them to & fro
In moves dissociate from their souls' demand,
For dynasts' ends that few even understand.

Spirit of the Years.

Speak more materially, & less in dream.

Spirit of Rumour.

I'll do it..... The stir of ~~war~~ strife grows well defined
Around the hamlet & the church thereby:
Till, from the wood, the ponderous columns wind
Guided by Godinot, with Werlé nigh.
They bear upon the vill. But the gruff guns
Of Dickson's Portuguese
Punch spectral vistas through the maze of these!....
More Frenchmen press, & roaring antiphons
Of cannonry contuse the roofs & walls & trees.

Spirit of the Pities

Wrecked is the ancient bridge, the green grass plot,

The blooming fruit-tree, the fair flower-knot!

Cl. Mowncey
A Jones

Spirit of Rumour.

Yet the true mischief to the English might
Is meant to fall not there. Look to the right,
And read the shaping scheme by yon hill-side,
Where cannon, foot, & brisk dragoons you see,
With Werlé & Latour-Maubourg to guide,
Waiting to deal out red calamity.

Beresford now becomes aware of this project on his flank, & sends orders to throw back his right to face the attack. The order is not obeyed. Almost at the same moment the French rush is made, the Spanish & Portuguese allies of the English are beaten back, & the hill is won. But two English divisions bear from the centre of their front, & plod desperately up the hill to retake it.

Spirit Sinister.

Now he among us who may wish to ~~see~~ be
A skilled practitioner in slaughtery
Should watch this hour's fruition yonder there,
And he will know, if knowing ever were,
How mortals may be freed their fleshy cells,
And quaint red doors set ope in sweating fells,
By sd methods swift & slow & foul & fair!

The English who have plunged up the hill are caught in a heavy mist, that hides from them an advance in their rear of the

Lancers & Hussars of the enemy. The lines of the Buffs, the Sixtysixth, & those of the Fortyeighth who were with them, in a chaos of smoke, steel, sweat, curses, & blood, are beheld melting down like wax from an erect position to level heaps. Their forms lie rigid, or twitch & turn, as they are trampled over by the hoofs of the enemy's horse. Those that have not fallen are taken.

Spirit of the Pities

It works as you, uncanny Phantom, wist.....
□ Whose is that towering form
That leans across the mist
To where the shocks are sorest? - his with arm
Outstretched, & grimy face, & bloodshot eye,
Like one who, having done his deeds, will die?

Spirit of Rumour.

He is one Beresford, who leads the fight
For England here to-day.

Spirit of the Pities

He calls ~~the~~ sight
Despite itself! - parries yon lancer's thrust,
And with his own sword renders dust to dust!

The ghastly climax of the strife is reached; the combatants are seen to be firing grape & canister at ~~each other at~~ speaking distance, & discharging musketry in each other's faces when so close that their ~~expressions~~ complexions may be recognized. Hot corpses, their mouths

blackened by cartridge-biting, & surrounded by cast-away knapsacks, firelocks, hats, stocks, flint-boxes, & priming-horns, together with red & blue rags of clothing, gaiters, epaulettes, limbs, & viscera, accumulate on the slopes, increasing from twos & threes to half-dozens, & from half-dozens to heaps, which steam with their own warmth as the spring rain falls gently upon them.

The critical instant has come, & the English break. But a comparatively fresh division, with fusileers, is brought into the turmoil by Hardinge & Cole, & these make one last strain to save the day, & their names, & lives. The fusileers mount the incline, & issuing from the smoke & mist startle the enemy by their arrival on a spot deemed won.

Semichorus I of the Pities (aerial music)

They come, beset by riddling hail;
They sway like sedges in a gale;
They fail, & win, & win, & fail. Albuera!

Semichorus II.

They gain the ground there, yard by yard,
Their brows & hair & lashes charred,
Their blackened teeth set firm & hard.

Semichorus I.

Their mad assailants surge & reel,
And face, as men who scorn to feel,
The close-lined, three-edged prongs of steel.

Semichorus II.

Till faintness follows closing-in,
When, faltering headlong down, they spin
Like leaves. But those pay well who win Albuera.

Semichorus I.

Out of six thousand souls that sware
To hold the mount, or pass elsewhere,
But eighteen hundred muster there.

Semichorus II.

Pale Colonels, Captains, ranksmen lie,
Facing the earth or facing sky;—
They ~~thought~~ [strove] to live, they ~~learnt~~ [stretch] to die.

Semichorus I.

~~[illegible]~~, ~~[illegible]~~,
Friends, ~~foes~~, foemen, ~~co~~mingle; heap & heap.—
Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep,
Where harmless worms caress & creep.

Chorus

Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep,
Where harmless worms caress & creep.—
What ~~ghost~~ [man] can grieve? what ~~man~~ woman weep?
Better than waking 'tis to sleep! Albuera.

The night comes on, & darkness covers the battlefield.

Scene V

Windsor Castle. A room in the King's apartments.

The walls of the room are padded, & also the articles of furniture, the stuffings being overlaid with satin & velvet on which are worked in gold threads monograms & crowns. The windows are guarded, & the floor covered with thick cork, carpeted.

The King is seated by ~~one~~ a window, & two of Dr. Willis's attendants are in the room. His Majesty is now seventy two; his sight is very defective, but he does not look ill. He appears to be lost in melancholy thought, & talks to himself reproachfully, a hurried manner on occasion being the only irregular symptom that he betrays.

King.

In my lifetime I did not look after her enough – enough – enough! And now she is lost to me, & I shall never see her more. Had I but known, had I but thought of it! Gentlemen, when did I lose the Princess Amelia?

First Attendant

The second of last November, your Majesty.

King.

And what is it now?

First Attendant

Now, sir, it is the beginning of June.

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King.

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First Attendant

Now, sir, it is the beginning of June.

King.

Ah, June. I remember! ..... The June flowers are not for me. I shall never see them; nor will she. So fond of them as she was. .... Even if I were living I would never go where there are flowers any more. I would go to the bare barren places that she never would walk in, & never knew, so that nothing might remind me of her, & make my heart ache more than I can bear! ..... Why, the beginning of June? – that's when they are coming to examine me!

(He grows excited.)

First Attendant (to Second Attendant, aside)

Dr. Reynolds ought not to have reminded him of their visit. It only disquiets him & makes him less fit to see them.

King.

How long have I been confined here?

First Attendant.

Since November, Sir; for your health's sake entirely, as your Majesty knows.

King.

What, what? So long? Ah, yes. I must bear it. This is the fourth great black gulf in my poor life, is it not! The fourth.

A signal at the door. The second attendant opens it & whispers. Enter softly Sir Henry Halford, Dr William Heberden, Dr. Robert Willis, Dr Matthew Baillie, the King's apothecary, & one or two other gentlemen.

King (straining his eyes to discern them)

What! Are they come? What will they do to me? How dare they! I am Elector of Hanover! (Finding that Dr. Willis is among them he shrieks). O, they are going to bleed me — yes, to bleed me! (piteously) My friends, don't bleed me — ~~don't~~ pray don't! It makes me so weak to take my blood. And the leeches do, too, when you put so many. You will not be so unkind, I am sure!

Willis (to Baillie)

It is extraordinary what a vast aversion he has to bleeding — that most salutary remedy, properly practised. He submits to leeches as yet, but I won't say that he will for long without being strait-jacketed again.

King (catching some of the words)

You will strait-jacket me? O no, no!

Willis

Leeches are not effective, really. Dr Home, when I mentioned it to him to-day, said he would bleed him till he fainted if he had charge of him.

King.

O will you do it, sir, against my will,
And put me, once your King, in needless pain?
I do assure you truly, my good friends,
That I have done no harm. In sunnier years
Ere I was throneless, withered to a shade,

Deprived of my divine authority –
When I was hale, & ruled the English land –
I ever did my utmost to promote
The welfare of my people, body & soul!
273 Right many a day & night I have prayed & mused
How I could bring them to a better way.
So much of me you surely know, my friends,
And will not hurt me in my weakness here!

(He trembles.)

Spirit of the Pities.

The tears that lie about this plightful scene
Of heavy travail in a suffering soul,
Mocked with the forms & feints of royalty
While scarified by briery Circumstance,
Might drive Compassion past her patientness
To hold that some mean, monstrous irony
Had built this mistimed fabric of the spheres
To & watch the throbbings of its captive lives,
(The which may Truth forfend), & not thy said
Unmaliced, unimpassioned, nescient Will!

Spirit of the Years.

Mild one, be not too touched with human fate.
Such is the Drama: such the Mortal state:
No sigh of thine can null the Plan Predestinate!

Halford.

We have come to do your Majesty no harm.
Here's Dr. Heberden, whom I am sure you like,
And this is Dr Baillie. – We have come
But to inquire & gather how you are,
Thereon to let the Privy Council know,
And give assurance for your people's good.

A brass band is heard playing in a distant part of Windsor.

King.

Ah – what does that band play for here to-day!
She has been dead & I so short a time!...
Her little hands are hardly cold as yet;
But they can show such cruel indecency
As to let play that band!

Halford.

They guess not, sir,
That you can hear them, or their notes would cease.
Their boisterous music fetches back to me
That, of our errands to your Majesty,
One was congratulation most sincere
Upon this glorious victory you have won.
The news has just arrived; the band ~~is called~~ comes out
To celebrate it, & to honour you.

King.

A victory?. I? Pray where?

Halford.

Indeed so, sir:
Hard by Albuera – far in harried Spain –
Yes, sir; you have achieved a victory
Of dash unmatched & feats unparalleled!

King.

He says I have won a battle! But I thought
I was a poor afflicted captive here,
In blindness lingering out my lonely days,
Beset with terror of these myrmidons
That suck my blood like vampires! Ay, ay, ay! –
No aims left to me but to quicken death
To quicklier please my son! – And yet he says
That I have won a battle! O God, curse, damn!
When will the speech of the world accord with truth,
And men's tongues roll sincerely!

Gentleman (aside)

Faith, 't would seem
As if the madman were the sanest here!

The King's face has flushed, & he becomes violent. The attendants rush forward to him.

Spirit of the Pities.

Something within me aches to pray
To some Great Heart, to take away
This evil day, this evil day!

?

Chorus Ironic

Ha-ha! That's good. He'll pray to It:—
But where do Its compassions sit?
Yea, where abides the heart of It?

Is it where sky-fires flame & flit,
Or solar craters spew & spit,
Or ultra-stellar night-webs knit?

~~What is~~ Its shape? ~~Man's~~ the wise Owl's counterfeit?
That on the edge of Things ~~has lit~~ alit,
Blinks there with blinkings infinite?
~~Ha-ha! 'Tis good to pray to It!~~

The King's paroxysm continues. The attendants hold him.

Halford.

This is distressing. One can never tell
How he will take things now. I thought Albuera
A subject that would surely solace him.
These paroxysms – have they been bad this week?
(To Attendants)

First Attendant.

Sir Henry, no. He has quite often named
The late Princess, as gently as a child
A little bird found starved.

Willis (aside to apothecary)

I must increase the opium to-night, & lower him by a double ~~[illegible]~~ set

of leeches, since he won't stand the lancet quietly.

Apothecary.

You should take twenty ounces, doctor, if a drop – indeed, go on blooding till he's unconscious. He is too robust by half. And the watering-pot would do good again – not less than six feet above his head. See how heated he is.

Willis

Curse that Town-band. It will have to be stopped.

Heberden.

The same thing is going on all over England, no doubt, on account of this victory.

Halford.

When he is in a more domineering mood he likes such allusions to his rank as King ..... If he could resume his walks on the terrace he might improve slightly. But it is too soon yet. – We must consider what we shall report to the Council. There is little hope of his being much better. What do you think, Willis?

Willis

None. He is done for this time!

Halford.

Well, we must soften it down a little, so as not to upset the Queen too much, poor woman, & distract the Council unnecessarily. Eldon will go pumping up bucketfuls, & the Archbishops are so easily shocked that a certain conventional reserve is almost forced upon us.

Willis (returning from the King)

He is already better. The paroxysm has nearly passed. Your opinion will be far more favourable before you leave.

The King soon grows calm, & the expression of his face changes to one of dejection. The attendants leave his side: he bends his head, & covers his face with his hand, while his lips move as if in prayer. He then turns to them.

King (meekly)

I am most truly sorry, gentlemen,
If I have ~~said aught~~ used language that would seem to show
Discourtesy to you for your good help
In this unhappy malady of mine!
My nerves give way, my friends; my flesh is weak:
"The good that I would do I leave undone,
The evil which I would not, that I do!"
Shame, shame on me!

Willis (aside to the others)

Now he will be as low as before he was in the other extreme.

King

A King should bear him kingly; I, of all,
One of so long a line. O fie, fie, fie!.....
— This battle that you speak of? — Spain, of course?
Ah — Albuera. And many killed — eh? Yes?

Halford.

Many good men, sir, dead, I grieve to say.

There's Major-General Houghton, Captain Bourke,
And Herbert of the Third, Lieutenant Fox,
And Captains Erck & Montague, & more.
With Majors-general Cole & Stewart wounded,
And Quartermaster-general Wallace too:
A total of three Generals, Colonels five,
Five Majors, fifty Captains, & to these
Add ensigns & lieutenants six score odd,
Who went out, but returned not. Heavily thinned
Were the alternate battalions there
Who stood & bearded Death by the hour that day!

Mr Clowes
Mr Lears

<u>King</u>.

O fearful price for victory! Add thereto
All those I lost at Walcheren! — A crime
Lay there! ..... I ~~held to~~ stood on Chatham's being sent!
It wears on me, till I am unfit to live!

<u>Willis</u> (aside to the others)

Don't let him get on that Walcheren business. There will be another outbreak. Heberden, please ye talk to him. He fancies you most.

<u>Heberden</u>.

I'll tell him some of the brilliant feats of the battle.

<u>Willis</u> (to the rest, while Heberden is talking to the King)

Well, my inside begins to cry cupboard. I had breakfast early. We have enough particulars now to face the Queen's Council with, I should say, Sir Henry?

Halford.

Yes. — I want to get back to town as early as possible to-day. Mrs Siddons has a party at her house at Westbourne to-night, & all the world is going to be there.

Baillie.

Well, I am not. But I have promised to take some friends to Vauxhall, as it is a grand gala & fireworks-night. Miss Ferron is going to sing "The Canary Bird". — The Regent's fête, by the way, is postponed till the nineteenth, on account of this relapse. Pretty grumpy he was at having to do it. All the world will be there, sure!

Willis.

And some from the Shades, too, of the fair sex. — Well, here comes Heberden. He has pacified his Majesty nicely. Now we can get away.

The Physicians withdraw softly, & the scene closes.

Scene VI.

London. Carlton House & the streets adjoining.

It is a cloudless midsummer evening, & as the west fades the stars beam down upon the city, the evening-star hanging like a jonquil in bloom. They are dimmed by the unwonted radiance

which spreads around & above Carlton House. As viewed from aloft the glare rises through the skylights, floods the forecourt towards Pall Mall, & kindles with a diaphanous glow the huge tents in the gardens that overlook the Mall. The hour has arrived of the Prince Regent's festivity.

A stream of carriages & sedan-chairs, moving slowly, stretches from the building along Pall Mall into Piccadilly & Bond Street, & crowds fill the pavements watching the bejewelled & feathered occupants. In addition to the grand entrance inside the Pall Mall colonnade there is a covert little "chair-door in Warwick Street for sedans only, by which arrivals are perceived to be slipping in almost unobserved.

Spirit Ironic.

What domiciles are those of singular expression
Whence no guest comes to join the gemmed procession,
That, west of Hyde, this, in the Park-side Lane,
Each front beclouded like a mask of pain?

Spirit of Rumour.

Therein the princely host's two spouses dwell;
A wife in each. Let me inspect & tell.

The walls of the two houses — one in Park Lane, the other at Kensington — become transparent.

I see within the first his latter wife —
That Caroline of Brunswick whose brave sire

Yielded his breath on Jena's reeking plain,
And of whose kindred other yet may fall
Ere long, if character indeed be fate. –
She ides feasting, & is full of jest
As each gay chariot ~~pass~~ rumbles to the rout.
"I rank like ~~an~~ your Archbishops' wives," laughs she:
"Denied my husband's honours. Funny me!"

Suddenly a Beau on his way to the Carlton House festival halts at her house, calls, & is shown in.

He brings her news that a fresh favourite rules
Her husband's ready heart; likewise of those
Obscure & unmissed courtiers late deceased,
Who have in name been bidden to the feast
By blundering scribes.

The Princess is seen to jump up from table at some words from her visitor, & clap her hands.

The juxtaposed ideas
Have fired her hot with curiosity,
And lit her quick invention with a plan.

Princess of Wales.

Mine God, I'll go disguised – in some dead name
And enter by the leetle, sly, chair-door
Designed for those not welcomed openly.
There unobserved I'll note ~~my~~ mine new supplanter!

'Tis indiscreet? Let indiscretion rule,
Since caution pensions me so scurvily!

Spirit Ironic

Good. Now for the other sweet & slighted spouse.

Spirit of Rumour.

The second roof shades the Fitzherbert fair;
Reserved, perverse. As coach & coach roll by
She mopes within her lattice; lampless, lone,
As if she grieved at her anomalous fate,
And yet were loth to put a period to it
By frankly forfeiting ~~those~~ the Prince & town.
"Bidden", says she, "but as one low of rank,
And go I will not so unworthily,
To sit with common dames!" – A flippant friend
Writes then that a new planet rules to-night
The heart of her erratic lord; whereon
The fair Fitzherbert muses hankeringly.

Mrs Fitzherbert (soliloquizing)

The guest-card which I publicly refused
Might, as a fancy, privately be used!.....
Yes – one last look – a wordless wan farewell
To this false life which glooms me like a knell,
And him, the cause; from some hid nook survey
~~The night's~~ His new magnificence; – & go for aye! ~~Glide away~~!

Spirit of Rumour.

She cloaks & veils, & in her private chair
Passes the Princess also stealing there –
Two honest wives, & yet a differing pair!

Spirit Ironic.

With dames of strange repute, who bear a ticket
For screened admission by the private wicket.

Chorus of Ironic Spirits (aerial music)

A wife of the body, a wife of the mind,
A wife somewhat frowsy, a wife too refined:
Could the twain but grow one, & no other dames be,
No husband in Europe more steadfast than he!

Spirit of the Years

Cease fooling on weak waifs who love & hate
But as the Immanent ~~Will~~ Mode may ~~[illegible]~~ arbitrate.
– See, now, how those withinside pulse & prate!

The walls of Carlton House open, & the spectator finds himself confronting the revel.

Le Lean Manor

Scene VII.

The Same. The interior of Carlton House.

A central Hall is disclosed, radiant with constellations of candles, lamps, & lanterns, & decorated with flowering shrubs. An opening on the left reveals the Grand Council Chamber prepared for Dancing, the floor being chalked with arabesques having in the centre "G. III. R". with a crown, arms, & supporters. Orange-trees & rosebushes in bloom stand against the walls. On the right hand extends a glittering vista of the supper-rooms & tables, now crowded with guests. This display reaches as far as the conservatory westward, & branches into long tents on the lawn.

On a dais at the chief table laid with gold & silver plate the Prince Regent sits like a lay figure, in a state chair of crimson & gold, with six servants at his back. He swelters in a gorgeous uniform of scarlet & gold lace which represents him as a Field Marshal, & he is surrounded by a hundred & forty of his particular friends.

Down the middle of this state table runs a purling brook crossed by quaint bridges, in which gold & silver fish frisk about between banks of moss & flowers. The whole scene is lit with wax candles in chandeliers & in countless candelabra on the tables.

The people at the upper tables include the Duchess of York, looking tired from having just received as hostess most of the ladies present except those who have come informally; Louis XVIII of

France, the Duchess of Angoulême, all the English Royal Dukes, nearly all the common Dukes & Duchesses; also the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, & other Ministers, the Lord Mayor & Lady Mayoress, all the more fashionable of the other peers, & peeresses [& members of Parliament]; Generals, Admirals, & Mayors, with their wives. The ~~majority of the~~ ladies of position wear, almost to the extent of a uniform, a nodding head-dress of ostrich feathers, with diamonds, & gowns of white satin embroidered in gold or silver, on which, owing to the heat, a drop of wax from the chandeliers occasionally falls.

The Guards' bands play, & attendants rush about in blue & gold lace.

Spirit of the Pities

The Queen, the Regent's mother, sits not here;
Wanting, too, are his sisters, I perceive;
And it is well. With the distempered King
Immured at Windsor, sore distraught or dying,
It borders nigh on an indecency
In their regard, that this loud feast is kept;
A thought not strange to many, as I read,
Even of those gathered here.

Spirit Ironic.

My dear phantom & crony, the gloom upon their faces is due rather ~~due~~ to their having borrowed those diamonds at eleven per cent than to their loyalty to a ~~[illegible]~~ suffering monarch! But let us test the feeling. I'll spread a report.

He calls up the Spirit of Rumour, who scatters whispers through the assemblage.

A guest (to his neighbour)

Have you heard this report – that the King is dead?

Another guest.

It has just reached me from the other side. Can it be true?

Third Guest

I think it probable. He has been very ill all the week.

Prince Regent.

Dead? Then my fête is spoilt, by God!

Sheridan (holding up his glass & bowing to the Regent)

Long live the King!

Marchioness of Hertford (~~the present favourite,~~ her admirer to the Regent)

The news is more natural than the moment of it! It is too cruel to you to happen now!

Prince Regent (provisionally throwing a regal ~~majesty~~ air into his countenance)

Damn me, though; can it be true?

289 Duchess of York (on the Regent's left)

I hardly can believe it. This forenoon
He was reported mending.

Duchess of Angoulême (on the Regent's right)

On this side

They are just saying that the news is false –
That Bonaparté's child, the "King of Rome"
Is dead, & not your royal father, sire.

Prince Regent.

That's mighty fortunate! Had it been true
I should have been abused by all the world –
The Queen the loudest of the chorus too –
Though I have been postponing this pledged feast
Through days & weeks, in hopes the King would mend,
While expectation fisted with delay.
But give a dog a bad name – or a Prince!
So, then, it is this new-come King of Rome
Who has passed ~~on~~ or ever the world has welcomed him! ....
Call him a King – that pompous upstart's son –
Beside us scions of the ancient lines!

Duke of Bedford.

I think that rumour untrue also, sir. I heard it as I drove up from Woburn this evening, & it was contradicted then.

Prince Regent.

Drove up this evening, did ye, Duke. Why did you cut it so close?

Duke of Bedford.

Well, it so happened that my sheepshearing dinner was fixed for this very day, & I couldn't put it off. So I dined with them

there at one o'clock, discussed the sheep, rushed off, drove the two-&-forty miles, jumped into my clothes at my house here, & reached your royal highness's door in no very bad time.

Prince Regent.

Capital, capital. But 'pon my soul, 'twas a close shave!

Soon the babbling & glittering company rise from supper, & begin promenading through the rooms & tents, the Regent setting the example, & mixing up & talking unceremoniously with his guests of every degree. He & the group round him disappear into the remoter chambers; but many concentrate in the Grecian Hall which forms the foreground of the scene, whence a glance can be obtained into the ball-room, now filled with dancers.

The band is playing the tune of the season "The Regency Hornpipe", which is danced as a country-dance by some thirty couples; so that by the time the top couple have danced down the figure they are quite breathless. Two ~~noble~~ young lords talk desultorily as they survey the scene.

First Lord.

Are the rumours of the King of Rome's death confirmed?

Second Lord.

No. But they are probably true. He was a feeble baby from the first. I believe they had to baptize him on the day he was born. What can one expect after such presumption — calling him the

New Messiah, & God knows what all. Ours is the only country which did not write fulsome poems about him." "Wise English!" the Tsar Alexander said drily when he heard it.

First Lord.

Ay! The affection between that *par nobile fratrum* has begun to cool. Alexander's soreness at having his sister thrown over so cavalierly is not salved yet.

Second Lord.

There is much besides. I'd lay a guinea there will be a war between Russia & France before another year has flown.

First Lord.

Prinny looks a little worried to-night.

Second Lord.

Yes. The Queen don't like the fête being held, considering the King's condition. # She & her friends say it should have been put off altogether. But the Princess of Wales is not troubled that way. Though she was not asked herself she went wildly off & bought her people new gowns to come in. Poor maladroit woman! . . . .

Another new dance of the year is started, & another long line of couples begin to foot it.

That is a pretty thing they are doing now. What d'ye call it?

First Lord.

"Speed the Plough". It is just out. They are having it everywhere. The next is to be one of those foreign things in three-eight time they call Waltzes. I question if anybody is up to dancing 'em here yet.

"Speed the Plough" is danced to its conclusion, & the band strikes up "The Copenhagen Waltz".

Spirit Ironic.

Now for the wives. They both were tearing bitter,
Unless reflection drew them back again;
But dignity that nothing else may move
Succumbs to woman's curiosity.
The Prince returns. Prithee, Years, call them nigh!

The Prince Regent, having gone the round of the other rooms, now appears at the ball-room door, & stands looking at the dancers. Suddenly he turns, & gazes about with a ruffled face. He sees a tall red-faced man near him — Lord Moira, one of his friends.

Prince Regent.

Damned hot here, Moira. Hottest of all for me!

Moira.

Yes, it is warm, Sir. Hence I do not dance.

Prince Regent

H'm. What I meant was of another colour;
I spoke it figuratively.

Moira

O indeed, Sir?

Prince Regent.

She's here. I heard her voice. I'll swear I did!

Moira.

Who, sir?

Prince Regent

Why, the Princess of Wales. Do you think I could mistake those beastly German Ps & Bs of hers! – She asked to come, & was denied; but she's got here, I'll wager ye, through the chair-door in Warwick Street, which I arranged for a few ladies whom I wished to come privately. (He looks about again, & moves till he is by a door which affords a peep up the grand staircase). By God, Moira, I see two figures up there who shouldn't be here – leaning over the balustrade of the gallery!

Moira.

Two figures, sir. Whose are they?

Prince Regent.

She is one. The Fitzherbert is t'other! O I am almost sure it is! I would have welcomed her, but she bridled & said she wouldn't sit down at my table as a plain "Mrs." to please anybody. As I had sworn that on this occasion people should sit strictly according to their rank, I wouldn't give way. Why the devil did she come like this? 'Pon my soul, these women will be the death o' me!

Moira (looking cautiously up the stairs)

I can see nothing of her, sir, nor of the Princess either. There is a crowd of idlers up there leaning over the bannisters, & you may have

mistaken some others for them.

Prince Regent.

O no. They have drawn back their heads. There have been such damned mistakes made in sending out the cards that the biggest w—— in London might be here. She's watching Lady Hertford, that's what she's doing. For all their indifference both of them are as jealous as two cats over one tom.

(Somebody whispers that a lady has fainted up the stairs)

That's Maria, I'll swear! She's always doing it. Whenever I ~~on my entering a room~~ hear of some lady fainting about upon the furniture ~~at my entry~~ presence, ~~a room~~ & sending for a glass of water, I say to myself, There's Maria at it again, by God!

Spirit Ironic.

Now let him hear their voices once again.

The Regent ~~seems to~~ thinks he hears from the stairs the ~~voices~~ tongues of the two ladies growing louder, the Princess pouring reproaches into one ear, & Mrs Fitzherbert into the other.

Prince Regent.

'Od seize 'em, Moira; this will drive me mad!
If men of blood must mate with only one
Of those dear damned deluders called the Sex,
Why has Heaven teased them with the taste for change? —
God, I begin to loathe the whole cursed show!
How hot it is! Get me a glass of brandy,
Or I shall swoon off too. Now let's go out,

And find some fresher air upon the lawn.
Here Moira; Yarmouth; quick & come along.

Exit the Prince Regent, with Lords Moira & Yarmouth. The band strikes up "La Belle Catarina", & a new figure is formed.

Spirit of the Years.

Phantoms, ye strain your powers unduly here,
Making faint fancies as they were indeed
The Mighty Will's firm work.

Spirit Ironic.

Nay, Father; nay.
The wives prepared to hasten hitherward
Under the names of some gone down to death
Who yet were bidden. Must they not be here?

Spirit of the Years.

There lie long leagues between a woman's word—
"She will, indeed she will!"— & acting on't.
Whether those came or no, thy antics cease,
And let the revel wear it out in peace.

Enter Spencer Perceval the Prime Minister, a small, pale, grave-looking man, & ~~another minister~~ ~~a Lord, meeting~~ an Under-secretary of State he meeting.

Under-Secretary. ~~Lord Minister~~.

Is the King of Rome really dead, & the gorgeous gold cradle wasted?

Perceval.

O no. He is alive & waxing strong:
That tale has been set travelling more than once.
But touching it there echoes to our ear
Something of graver import, unimpeachable.

Under-Secretary.

Your speech is dark.

Perceval

Well, a new war in Europe.
Before the year is out there may arise
A red campaign outscaling any seen.
Russia & France the parties to the strife —
Ay, to the death!

Under-Secretary.

By Heaven, sir, do you say so!

Enter Castlereagh, a tall handsome man with a Roman nose, who seeing them, approaches.

Perceval.

Ha, Castlereagh. Till now I have missed you here.
This news is startling for us all, I say?

Castlereagh.

My mind is blank on it! Since I left office
I know no more what villany's ~~aff~~ afoot,
Or virtue either, than an anchoret
Who mortifies the flesh in some lone cave.

Perceval.

Well, happily that may not last for long.
But this grave pother that's just now agog
May reach such distance in its consequence
As to outlast our lives! Yes, Bonaparte
And Alexander — late such bosom friends —
Are closing to a mutual murder-bout,
At which the sky of Europe will turn pale.
Bonaparte says the fault is not with him,
And so says Alexander. But we know
The Austrian knot began their severance
And that the Polish question widens it.
Nothing but time is needed for the clash.
And if so be that Wellington can but keep
His foot in the Peninsula awhile,
Between the upper & the nether stones
Of Russia & of Spain, Napoleon's ~~dust~~ crushed.

Spirit of Rumour (to the Spirit of the Years)

Permit me now to join them & confirm,
By what I bring from far, their misgiving?

Spirit of the Years.

I'll go. Thou knowest not greatly more than they.

The Spirit of ~~Rumour~~ the Years enters the apartment in the shape of a pale hollow-eyed gentleman wearing an embroidered suit. At the same time re-enter the Regent, Lords Moira, Yarmouth, Keith, Lady

Hertford, Sheridan, the Duke of Bedford, with many more notables. The band changes into the popular dance "Down with the French", & the characters aforesaid look on at the dancers.

Baxter

Hislop

Spirit of the Years (to Perceval)

Yes, Sir; your text is true. In closest touch
With European courts & cabinets,
The imminence of ~~deep~~ dire & deadly war
Betwixt these east & western emperies
Has come by special pathways to mine ear.
You may not live to see it (Perceval starts); but, believe,
Before five more have joined the shotten years
Whose useless films infest the foggy Past,
Traced o'er with teachings glimpsed unheedingly,
The rawest Dynast of the group concerned
Will, for the good or ill of mortal kind,
Down-topple to the dust like soldier Saul,
And Europe's dry & mouldy monarchies
Be propped anew; while garments roll in blood
To confused noise, with burning, & fuel of fire.
~~The~~ Nations shall lose their noblest in the strife,
And tremble at the tidings of an hour.

(He passes into the crowd & vanishes)

Prince Regent (who has heard with parted lips)

Who the devil is he?

Perceval.

One in the suite of the French princes, ~~I think~~ perhaps, sir? (though his tone was not monarchical.) He seems to be a foreigner.

Castlereagh.

His manner was that of an old prophet, & his features had a Jewish cast, which accounted for his Hebraic style.

Prince Regent.

He could not have known me, to ~~address~~ speak ~~to~~ so freely!

Sheridan.

I ~~almost~~ expected to see him write on the wall, like the gentleman with the Hand at Balshazzar's Feast.

Prince Regent (recovering)

He seemed to know a damn sight more about what's going on in Europe, sir (to Perceval), than your Government does with all its secret information.

Perceval.

He is recently over, I conjecture, your Royal Highness, & brings the latest impressions.

Prince Regent

By Gad, sir, I shall have a comfortable time of it in my regency, or reign, if what he foresees be true! But I was born for war; it is my destiny!

He draws himself up inside his ~~Field~~ marshal's uniform & walks away. The group dissolves, the band continuing stridently "Down with the French," as dawn glimmers in.
Soon the Regent's guests begin severally & in groups to withdraw.

Spirit of the Pities

Behold to-morrow ridd'les the curtains through,
And labouring life without shoulders its cross anew!

Chorus of the Years (aerial music)

Why watch we here? Look all around
Where Europe spreads her crinkled ground,
From Osmanlee to Hekla's mound,
Look all around!

Hark at the wind-combed Ural pines;
See how each, pendulum-wise, inclines;
Mark the ~~Alps'~~ clouds' labyrinthine lines;

Behold the tumbling Biscay Bay;
The Midland main in silent sway;
As ~~bidden~~ pricked to move them, so move they.

No less through regal puppet-shows
The ~~Great~~ rapt Determinator throes,
That neither good nor evil knows!

Chorus of the Pities.

Yet It may wake & understand
Ere Earth unshape, know all things, and
With knowledge use a painless hand,
A painless hand!

Solitude reigns in the chambers, & the scene shuts up.

End of the Second Part of The Dynasts.

Sept 28. 1905.